

Betrothed

by SergeantShinoaHiiragi

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Summary: *HICCUPxASTRID* HTTYD2 never happened. "It's a... matter of peace" Hiccup frowned "So... what does Astrid have to do with this?" Stoick took a deep breath "She's involved more than anyone else on Berk, son"

1. It's a matter of peace

****This is crossover but the pairing is, as always, Hiccstrid, so don't worry ;)****

* * *

><p>"Sit"<p>

Hiccup flinched. His father hadn't talked to him in that tone for a long time. His voice was deeper than usual and very serious.

Beside him, Astrid sat straight on the chair with a frown, her gaze locked on the chief.

"There is... something important I have to tell you two" the man announced.

"Yes?" Hiccup encouraged.

It wasn't like he wanted to hurry his father, but he and Astrid were having their morning flight in peace before Snotlout had come saying Stoick had to talk to them. He was still a bit pissed for the interruption, while Astrid seemed completely calm despite her previous fit of anger.

"It's a... matter of peace, chief duties"

Hiccup frowned "So... what does Astrid have to do with this?"

Stoick took a deep breath "She's involved more than anyone else on Berk, son"

He looked at the tiny blonde and there was pain and guilt in his green eyes.

Astrid pursed her lips and started to fidget with one of the skulls attached to her skirt.

"Stoick?" she asked with an unsteady voice "What's the matter?"

There was a moment of terrible silence before the words came out of the chief's mouth "I had to make a peace treat with the Scots of Dunbroch. I had to promise Hiccup would... marry the princess"

Hiccup blinked. From the corner of his eye he saw Astrid widening her eyes and bringing a hand to her mouth.

"Y-you can't be... serious" Hiccup studded.

Stoick closed his eyes "_Hiccup_"

Realisation hit him. He stood up "How did you _dare_?!" he yelled "Ruining my life! That's what you're doing! Did you forget we're supposed to get married in two weeks?!"

"It was done for peace!" his father shouted.

"I DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS STUPID PEACE! I JUST WANT TO MARRY THE WOMAN I LOVE!"

Astrid stood up and Hiccup looked at her. She was trembling, her eyes were empty, already clouded by tears.

"I... need a moment" she said quietly and rushed out of the room.

Hiccup turned to his father "I'll never forgive you for this" he hissed and ran away.

He found Astrid at the back of his house, knelt on the ground, her body shaken by sobs.

He fell on the grass beside her and wrapped his arms around her. He didn't say things like 'it's okay', he knew it wasn't.

"It was way too amazing to last" she cried hysterically "And now you're being sold to another woman"

She looked up and her puffy eyes made Hiccup gasp "Why does everyone get to be happy but not us?" she sobbed "_Why_?!"

He shook his head and he felt tears start to stream down his face as well. He could only pull her closer and rest his head on her shoulder.

"I don't know, Astrid. I don't know"

* * *

><p>"I ruined their lives forever" Stoick muttered watching from afar the two young lovers take flight on their dragons, their faces still red and tears streamed.<p>

Avannah Hofferson looked up at him "You didn't, Stoick" she said reassuringly.

Her husband, Gobrick, rested an hand on her shoulder "Hiccup will be chief soon" he said "He'll understand why you did it"

"Astrid won't" the chief said.

He had become really fonded of the young viking and he loved her like family. He was glad she could make his son so happy and having to break them apart was the hardest thing for him.

Avannah smiled sadly "She will understand as well. She's a strong woman, our Astrid. She'll... get over it"

Stoick could hear the uncertainty in the woman's voice and the worry for her daughter's conditions.

"I'm so sorry" he could only whisper.

And he didn't even know who he was whispering his apology to.

* * *

><p>REVIEW please and let me know what you think :)

2. Time for freedom is over

Here's chapter 2. I'll update chapter 3 tomorrow if I can :)

* * *

><p>Astrid tried not to scowl at the people who gave her sympathetic looks as she walked through the village.<p>

She hated when someone pitied her. She knew what they were thinking of her 'Poor Astrid, one day she's the future wife of the chief's heir, and the next she's a girl just like any other one"

When she finally reached the Haddock's house she lifted a trembling hand to knock. Before she could do it the door opened, revealing Stoick.

"Astrid" he said. His eyes were circled. She knew he had been fighting with Hiccup all night. The whole village had heard their shouts.

"I'm here to see Hiccup" she said, deadpanned "May I come in?"

Stoick was puzzled by her cold tone "O-of course" he said stepping aside.

Without another word, Astrid rushed to the stairs to Hiccup's room. She stopped in the doorway, looking at her surroundings: it was all so familiar. The desk she would often circle impatiently until Hiccup had finished some blueprint.

>The bed where the two of them had cuddled multiple times and where she had held him when he was feeling sick.<p>

Hiccup was fullfilling a bag, muttering under his breath.

"Have I ever told you you have this weird habit of muttering to yourself?" she said.

Hiccup suddenly looked up "Hey" he said.

She timidly stepped in "I shouldn't be allowed in this room anymore" she observed.

He frowned "Don't be silly"

She shrugged "You're betrothed to someone else. Women aren't supposed to be allowed in here"

He pursed his lips and looked away.

Astrid leaned on a wall "I read she has red hair" she blurted out.

Hiccup raised an eyebrow "Who?"

"Your princess. I borrowed some information from my parents' documents. Her name is Merida. They say she's very fierce and she is the best archer of Scotland. Maybe she could help you improve your horrible aim"

"_Astrid_..."

"There was a painting, you know? You'd be surprised knowing how many things you have in common with her. Her father has a fake leg as well and-"

She was cut off as Hiccup moved fast and grabbed her shoulders "Why are you telling me this?" he asked.

She looked down "I... I don't know"

And she didn't. The night before she had cried reading those information and looking at the pictures of the princess in her silk dresses, sat on her wooden throne.

"It doesn't mean anything to me" Hiccup said softly "I'll always love _you_"

"WELL YOU SHOULD NOT!" she yelled pushing him away "Damn, Hiccup. Please tell me you can't wait to meet her and marry her and have her babies! It would be easier for me than knowing that you still love me but we can't be together because of a stupid peace treat!"

Hiccup's expression was full of pain as he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her body "You think I could stop loving you?"

he asked "All of a sudden? I'm sorry it hurts you to hear it, but I love you and I'll love you til the day I die. Nothing's ever gonna change that"

He leaned in and kissed her. It was a gentle kiss with a little bit of desperation.

For a moment, Astrid melted in his arms and responded to the kiss but then her eyes snapped open and she took a step back.

Hiccup looked at her, his eyes wide "Did I do something wrong?" he asked.

She bit her lip "No it's just... I can't, Hic. It will just make things worse in the next few weeks"

"Next few weeks?"

She turned to leave "Didn't your father tell you?" she said with a broken voice "I'm coming to Dunbroch as well"

* * *

><p>"Do I have to remind you what happened last time this topic came up?" Princess Merida said following her mother on the stairs "Four years ago? Bear? Ring a bell, mother?"

Queen Elinor turned and glared at her daughter "This time is different, Merida" she said in a diplomatic tone "I gave you time and you haven't managed to find a husband. You'll be queen in three months and you need someone by your side. The peace with the Hooligans is a perfect reason to make you marry the heir of Stoick the Vast"

"No, it's not!" Merida exclaimed "Please, you can't make me!"

"That's where you're wrong, Merida" the queen had a stern look on her face "I can. At least this time. You'll marry Hiccup Haddock. Time for freedom is over"

"I HATE YOU!" the young princess yelled frustrated and slammed the door of her room.

Elinor sighed and turned, disappearing in the dark corridors of the castle.

* * *

><p>Hope you liked it. As always, review

~Clary Chase

3. Landing

Here's chapter 3, I hope you guys like it. Thank you for your reviews!

* * *

><p>"She hasn't talked to anyone since our departure" Ruffnut muttered.<p>

She and the others were looking at Astrid. She was sat on a box, her intense gaze fixed on the sea.

Fishlegs sighed "What do you expect, Ruff?" he said "Her life had been ruined forever"

Even Snotlout who had once had crush on her looked really worried about her silent and compliant behavior.

Hiccup was pacing back and forth on the opposite side of the ship, occasionally glancing at Astrid's still figure.

"Those two can't be apart" Tuffnut reasoned, then he smirked "I think there will be lots of trouble"

* * *

><p>"Nervous?" Stoick asked Hiccup as they neared the coast.<p>

The boy looked up. He was still mad at him for what he had done and wasn't exactly in the mood of being comforted by him. He just glared at his father and stormed off.

He found his fiancée - or ex-fiancée - on the deck.

"Hey" he greeted placing a hand on the small of her back.

She flinched and moved away from him "I told you you'll just make things worse" she reminded him, her face straight.

He rolled his eyes "Well, knowing me, you really think I'll give up so easily on you? On us?"

She grimaced and just then men yelled "We're docking!"

Hiccup shook his head and went to his father.

* * *

><p>"It will be okay"<p>

Astrid turned to see the gang smiling at her with affection. She couldn't help but smile back "Thank you, guys" she said.

She still didn't get why Stoick had wanted the five of them to come along. What was the use of it? They were absolutely useless in that contest. They were warriors, not people used to live in a castle, even if for a little amount of time.

From the corner of her eye she saw Hiccup looking at her but she ignored it.

The ship stopped. On the dock stood a family, and behind them lots of villagers.

The king looked a lot like Stoick with his red beard and big body.

The queen was a beautiful woman, she had long brown hair tied in a braid. Her eyes were calm and they denoteted a big intelligence.

>Next to her stood three teenagers. They all looked alike, with curly red hair and sheepish smiles on their faces. Astrid thought they would have gotten along with the twins.<p>

And last stood the princess. She was tall. Her frizzy red hair were tied up in a complicated bun. She wore a blue silk dress that made her light blue eyes stand out.

Astrid couldn't help but compare her to herself. She wore simple clothes, viking style, her hair was much less beautiful than the princess' and she certainly didn't have such an elegant posture like hers.

It wouldn't have been long before Hiccup fell in love with her and forget Berk and his life there.

She shook her head. She was a fighter. When had she become such a weak girl? She could perfectly live without a man in her life.

"Stoick!" the king exclaimed when they got off the ship.

He went to the chief and patted his shoulder "Fergus" the other greeted with a smile "It's been a long time"

King Fergus nodded "Finally at peace, uh?"

"Definetely" Stoick turned and beckoned Hiccup over.

He had a bright smile on his face but Astrid knew it was fake. She had seen his real smile and it was really different. This smile didn't reach his green eyes.

He bowed and Fergus smiled "A very handsome lass, Stoick" he said.

Hiccup blushed.

"This is my wife, Elinor. My three troublemakers, Harris, Hamish and Hubert and my daughter, Merida"

The princess stepped forward with a smile and bowed "It's a pleasure"

"The pleasure is all mine", Hiccup took her hand gently and placed a kiss on it. Merida's cheeks reddened a bit.

Astrid felt a pang in her chest. For a moment she forgot how to breath and she tightened the grip around her axe.

Stoick smiled "These are my best warriors" he said proudly "My nephew Snotlout Jorgenson, the twins Ruffnut and Tuffnut Thorston, Fishlegs Ingerman and last, but certainly not least, Astrid Hofferson"

They bowed and when she looked up, Astrid saw the queen looking at her with an intense gaze.

"Well, let's go inside" Fergus said.

Hiccup offered his arm to the princess and she took it with a smile.

Astrid walked behind them with her friends. She watched them talk with ease and she had to restrain herself from screaming to the royals how they had ruined her life.

"Stay calm" Ruffnut whispered in her ear.

"I am calm" she hissed.

* * *

><p>When they entered the dining room it was full of candles and the long table was full of plates and different kinds of food.<p>

They took seats and Astrid was surprised to know that she and the others were allowed to sit with them. She had expected to be treated like some sort of slave, a simple soldier.

Stoick wanted her beside him so she was exactly in front of Hiccup.

She tried not to look at him for too long even if she noticed he would often steal a glance in her direction.

"So, Hiccup" Elinor said at one point "We heard you have a dragon"

"A DRAGON?!" the triplets shouted.

"Boys, low your voice" the queen scolded them.

Hiccup smiled timidly "Yes, my queen. He and the other dragons will arrive here in two days"

"Really?" Merida asked with a bright smile.

He nodded "Mine is called Toothless. Then there's Hookfang who's Snotlout's, Barf and Belch who belong to the twins, Meatlug who's Fishlegs' and Stormfly who's Astrid's dragon. I'm sure you'll love them"

Merida seemed beyond herself at the thought of seeing a dragon.

Astrid played with her food but not really eating it seeing as she felt a whole in her stomach.

Stoick glanced down at her and frowned "You have to eat something" he scolded her in a low tone so that no one heard him.

All of her anger towards him melted when she looked at his worried expression.

"I'm not hungry" she mumbled.

Stoick sighed "You really are stubborn"

She scrolled her shoulders and glanced up. Hiccup's gaze was concerned and she instantly looked away.

"So" Elinor spoke up "You two girls have a husband at home, I suppose"

Hiccup almost choked on his food at the sentence but Astrid stayed calm.

She put on a polite smile "No, your Majesty. Or uh, Ruffnut is engaged to Snotlout but... I don't have a husband"

The queen raised an eyebrow "Strange, for a beautiful viking woman like you to not be married already"

Astrid pursed her lips "No one... has proposed to me... yet"

Hiccup had a sad expression and she saw Merida looking at the two of them with a frown.

"Well, maybe you'll find an handsome boy here in Scotland" Fergus told her with a wink.

She smiled a bit at the king "Maybe"

* * *

><p>"Beautiful night"<p>

Astrid turned. Hiccup was standing there on the balcony and she couldn't help but smile at the sight of him in the moonlight.

"Aren't you supposed to be with your princess?" she said.

He shrugged approaching her "She went to her room with her mother" he said "And YOU are my princess"

He grabbed her waist and pulled her closer "My viking princess"

"Hiccup..." she murmured as warning but then his lips were on hers and she couldn't find the strenght to push him away.
>Or maybe she didn't want to.<p>

She knotted her hands in his hair, running her fingers on the little braids she had made.
>He embrced her tightly, lifting her from the ground.<p>

When they pulled away the were both red.

"Seeing you with her just made it worse" she whispered "I thought I was on the verge of killing someone out of jealousy"

He chuckled and leaned in "That would have been so Astrid-like"

He kissed her neck softly and she closed her eyes to keep tears from falling.

He kissed her face and then leaned his forehead on hers.

"Please tell me this is a dream" he pleaded "Tell me that tomorrow I'll wake up and we'll be on Berk, ready for our morning flight"

She touched his nose "I can't lie to you, Hic"

He kissed her one last time "I know. I love you" he said.

"I love you too"

She smiled sadly as he made his way back inside.

When he was out of sight she plopped on the ground, her back against the railing, and closed her eyes.

* * *

><p>Stoick found her there asleep an hour later.<p>

He picked her up and carried her to the room they had assigned her.

He gently placed her under the covers and looked at her sleeping form. It was almost aching to see her like that. Even as she slept, her brows were furrowed and her lips pressed in a thin line. As if sadness and concern followed her even in her dreams.

"Goodnight, Astrid" he whispered before turning and closing the door behind him.

* * *

><p>I hope I didn't disappoint anyone with the way I introduced some characters.

As always, let me know what you think of the chapter and REVIEW!

Clary Chase

4. It's not your fault

Just to clear this up since so many of you are asking, this story is HICCSTRID!

I still don't know how I will develop the relationship between Hiccup and Merida but I prefer them as friends.

I really really hope the choice of pairing won't make you stop reading the story!

Here you have chapter 4, I hope you like it. Please review, it would mean so much to me!

Clary Chase

* * *

><p>The next morning the Vikings slept til late. Nobody woke them up because they had been sailing for two days and it was clear they all were exhausted.<p>

Astrid was the first one to get up. She didn't recognize the room. She must had fallen asleep on the balcony the night before and someone probably had taken her to bed.

Maybe Hiccup.

On a chair she found a blue dress, not too fancy and very comfortable. There was a little note on it:

'_Dear Miss Hofferson, we provided all of you of new clothes. I thought you would have needed clothes with a scottish style but still comfortable for everything you have to do. Hoping you like it, Princess Merida'_

She clenched her jaw. Hiccup would have probably found a similar note.

The princess actually looked pretty kind, but whenever she looked at her, she was reminded of the fact it was her fault she would have never married Hiccup.

She slowly went downstairs.

She stopped at the entrance of the dining room.

There were voices coming from the inside.

"I thought they would be weirder", it was the queen's voice.

"Oh, come on, Elinor!" exclaimed king Fergus "You already knew Stoick! Did you expect his people to be savages with no respect of anything?"

"They're vikings" Elinor hissed, and there was a sharp hint in her voice "They're not known for their kindness"

Astrid could hear the king snort.

"Anyway" the queen continued "I have to admit they are really nice and polite so I'll-"

"Eavesdropping?"

She jumped and turned around, meeting Hiccup's amused grin.

"You scared me" she muttered "And I wasn't eavesdropping"

"Yes you were" he said.

He leaned in and kissed her cheek. When he took a step back she looked around to make sure to no one had seen them.

"Are they saying something bad about our charming demeanour?" Hiccup asked.

"No" she said and then added "I missed your arms around me"

tonight"

"And I missed your body snuggled against mine" he smiled sadly.

Just then they heard footsteps and turned to see their friends and Stoick coming down the stairs.

They knocked and entered the dining room.

Astrid was surprised to find the princess in there as well.

They bowed to the royals and took their seats.

Ruffnut pushed a plate full of foods in front of her and she grunted "I'm not that hungry"

The girl raised her brow "Eat" she commanded.

She rolled her eyes and watched Merida who was talking to Hiccup "Today I'll show you around the castle. If you have to live here you need to start knowing it"

Hiccup almost choked on his food "L-live here?" he asked.

His sentence caught Stoick, Elinor and Fergus' attention who were standing in a corner talking.

Hiccup looked at his father "I won't be chief of Berk?"

Stoick pursed his lips "I don't think so, son"

He widened his eyes "Then who will?"

"Snotlout maybe"

Ruffnut's hand fell from the table. Astrid looked at Snotlout who had a puzzled expression "Way to know things" he said in a irritated tone.

Astrid was surprised: he had always wanted to be chief, and now that he had the chance he seemed disappointed.

She saw Hiccup clench his fists and knew he was restraining himself from yelling at his father.

"I'm not coming back to Berk" he said slowly.

Astrid's heart sank.

Elinor and Fergus just stood there, watching the scene.

"You'll be a king" was all Stoick said.

Hiccup let go of his fork "Well what if I-"

"_Hiccup_"

Astrid almost couldn't believe it was her who had called him. She was so used to stop his outbursts at his father that she forgot she was in Dunbroch and not in Berk. Her warning tone wasn't supposed to have

any particular effect on him.

But it did.

Everyone looked at her. Hiccup bit his lip as his gaze fixed on hers. A silent conversation was held with just their eyes.

They both knew what that meant. After the wedding, the Vikings would have headed back to Berk to never see Dunbroch again.

She swallowed and looked away. Merida seemed to understand something was off because she stood up "Well, Hiccup" she said gently "Why don't we start exploring the castle?"

Hiccup nodded and offered her his arm, which she took esitantly after stealing a glance in Astrid's direction whose head was down.

They went out and silence fell in the dining room.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Merida walked in silence for a few good minutes.<p>

When she was quite sure he wouldn't yell at her, she said "Miss Hofferson seems very used to calm you down"

For a split second she watched his green eyes widen and a slight blush spread on his freckled cheeks. But it was all so quick that she almost thought she had imagined it.

"We know each other since we were kids" he explained.

She just nodded. She was sure there was more to their relationship.

She had noticed the stolen glances beetween the two of them. The way she would always follow his moves and how he would brush almost casually his hands to hers whenever they were close enough.

Merida couldn't help but wonder... what if they were together? Had she spoiled their love story?

She shook her head trying to push those thoughts aside.

"So... she knows you well" she concluded.

He nodded, but still didn't meet her gaze "Yeah. She does know me well"

The conversation died there.

* * *

><p>Stank!

The axe dug deep in the target.

Astrid ran to pick it up and threw it in the air. She swung it in every direction and threw it again. It sank in the straw target once

again, right in the middle.

"You're really good"

She turned. Stoick and queen Elinor were standing just a few feet away from her.

She bowed, trying not to glare at the woman who was probably the main reason of the arranged marriage. She seemed to have way more power than her husband. "Your highness"

"She's my best shieldmaiden" Stoick said proudly.

She flinched a bit at the word but the queen didn't seem to notice.

"A pretty woman like you wouldn't be fighting here in Dunbroch" Elinor said gently.

She pursed her lips "Fighting for my land is my life, my queen, whether I'm pretty or not" she observed.

The queen smiled "I see. You're a brave woman"

She didn't know what to say and she was thankful when one of the guards came rushing.

"My queen, there is... something approaching Dunbroch" he said breathlessly.

The queen frowned and motioned for the two Vikings to follow her.

When they reached the front garden of the castle the others were already there.

Hiccup was with Merida. He glanced quickly at Astrid and smiled a bit.

"What is it?" Elinor asked putting her hand on her husband's arm.

He shrugged "I don't know, dear"

Astrid looked better.

"Wait" Hiccup said. He pointed to the sky and narrowed his eyes "But those are..."

"Toothless and Stormfly!" Astrid exclaimed excitedly. She let her axe fall to the ground and rushed forward as the two dragons landed on the field, Hiccup running behind her.

The dragons ran to their owners and Astrid found herself lifted off the ground and onto Stormfly's back.

"Hey girl!" she laughed hugging her "I'm so happy to see you!"

Just beside them Hiccup was wrestling his Night Fury.

She laughed at the sight, forgetting for a moment where they

were.

Her laugh caught Toothless' attention who let go his rider to ease her up from Stormfly.

"Toothless wait!"

She found herself on the ground, Toothless nudging her affectionally. She sat up with a chuckle and scratched his chin.

"Hey there girl" Hiccup said caressing Stormfly's snout.

Astrid stood up and smiled "Why are they here so early?" she asked.

Hiccup held out a note "It was in the saddle" he said.

They opened it and Hiccup peaked from Astrid's shoulder to read:

'They couldn't wait to see you two so I let them go. We'll be there in a day, Gobber'

They both smiled.

"You were eager to see us?" Hiccup said with a laugh scratching his dragon's ears.

Toothless gave him a gummy smile.

They turned to see the others approaching.

"Hey guys!" Stoick exclaimed stroking the dragons' backs affectionally. The two let the other vikings caress them and made their usual noises of affection.

Hiccup beckoned Merida over "Come here" he said softly "Let me show you"

Astrid clenched her fists. That was the line he had used with her before her first ride on Toothless.

"Don't worry" he reassured as Merida approached slowly "He's not gonna hurt you"

The queen had a worried expression while the king's eyes were sparkling.

Hiccup took her hand and placed it on Toothless. The dragon seemed uneasy.

For a moment his dark eyes flickered to Astrid.

His teeth came out and he shrugged the princess' hand away. Merida backed away with a start, her blue eyes wide.

"Toothless, what's wrong with you, bud?" Hiccup asked with a frown.

Toothless just made a disappointed sound and hid under Astrid's arm

who had been watching surprised.

"Hey" she said blushing furiously.

Hiccup's eyes widened. He took Merida's hand once again and laced his fingers with hers. Stormfly's thorns stood up on her tail at the sight and everyone flinched.

"Buddy" Hiccup began "This is Merida. She's my fiancée. My future wife"

Toothless' reptile eyes became thin lines like when he was angry.

He touched their intertwined hands with a hiss and separated them.

"Hiccup what-" Merida began but the Night Fury took his owner's vest between his teeth and literally threw him onto Astrid. The two of them stumbled on the grass with a yelp and they blushed even more if that was possible.

Hiccup stood and helped her up. His hand was warm and it made her skin tingle.

He turned towards his dragon with an angry expression "I don't know what's up with you but this needs to stop. Merida and I will get married"

The dragons' eyes became sad. Stormfly dropped her big head on Astrid's shoulder and whined.

Hiccup straightened himself and glanced quickly at his father who gave him an encouraging look.

"I'm sorry, Merida, your majesties. They're just not used to be around strangers" he said with a polite tone. He seemed embarrassed.

"It's okay, boy!" Fergus exclaimed with a smile "Just make sure he doesn't chop our daughter's hand!"

The queen had a horrified expression "Fergus!"

"Just kidding, dear!"

Elinor swallowed "Well, Stoick, why don't you help them take the dragons to the stables I've showed you?"

Stoick nodded "Of course, Elinor"

Hiccup kissed Merida's hand which made Toothless growl then he and Astrid turned and walked away with their dragons, followed closely by Stoick.

When they were out of sight the chief said "You have to keep him in line, Hiccup"

"I know" he said in a dark tone.

Astrid looked down, occasionally patting Stormfly's neck.

"Here we are"

The stables were big, the other dragons would have fit perfectly.

Stoick fidgeted for a moment "I'll leave you two alone, don't take too long"

They thanked him and he walked away.

Astrid dropped on the straw and leaned her back on Toothless who placed his head in her lap. She stroked him absentmindedly.

Hiccup plopped down and started to caress Stormfly's spines that were still erected.

* * *

><p>Merida peeped from the corner.<p>

Astrid looked tired as she stroked Hiccup's dragon's head. He was caressing the thorns on her dragon's tail.

The picture was so casual and simple, it seemed like they had done it so many times.

"Wonderful day" Astrid muttered.

Hiccup sighed "I know" then he frowned "Come on, Stormfly! There's no danger! Keep the thorns down, girl"

The dragon growled and did as she was told. Hiccup smiled and placed a kiss on her scaly skin "Good, girl"

Astrid scowled "We manage to keep it a secret and then our dragons come along and screw everything"

Toothless hissed a bit.

"It's not their fault, Astrid" Hiccup said gently "We never told them anything. They're still convinced WE are getting married"

His words hit her and Merida stumbled a bit.

'Get married'?

So they really were engaged!

Guilt overwhelmed her as she watched Astrid purs her lips and look away with a pained expression.

Sure it wasn't her fault -she didn't even want to get married!- but she still felt guilty for breaking them apart.

"They better get used to the idea" the Viking girl said "Toothless won't even come back to Berk"

Hiccup bit his lip "Yeah right" he grunted.

"Aren't you happy?" Astrid asked "King of Dunbroch! Isn't that what you've always wanted?"

Hiccup's eyes darkened "King. How in Thor's name am I supposed to do that?"

Astrid smiled softly and walked to him, making Toothless groan for the sudden lack of caresses.

"You'll be a great king" she said taking his face in her hands tenderly.

Merida was almost on the verge of going away but she wanted to hear what they had to say.

Hiccup smiled sadly "I kind of feel like I've already lived this situation but with the word 'chief'"

Astrid chuckled "Yeah. And the rest was something like 'I'll be there to help you with everything as your wife'"

He sighed and placed his head in the crook of her neck "I will miss you so much"

Her fingers gripped the back of his vest "I will miss you too"

He looked at her "I suppose you'll get married to someone else" he said.

She shrugged "I guess so. My parents won't let me be a shieldmaiden forever. They will want grandchildren"

His expression hardened "Thinking of you with another man is like a knife in my chest"

She puckered her lip "Same here. Do you even imagine how frustrating it is to see you with her? Everytime I think I might explode"

* * *

><p>Hiccup's heart sank at her words. He held her closer "I'm sorry you have to put up with this everyday"<p>

Astrid didn't say anything so he leaned in and kissed her neck. She shivered.

"Hic... we shouldn't" she breathed in his ear "Someone could see us"

He just caressed her soft skin with his lips. Her content sighs made him pull her even closer and when he left her neck he captured her lips.

Astrid seemed unsure at first but then she dug her slender fingers in his hair to pull him to her, responding eagerly. The kiss was passionate and also a little bit desperate.

She was the one to break the spell. Her lips were red and swollen "Just promise me one thing" she said.

He touched her nose with his "Everything, milady"

She closed her eyes at the sound of the nickname he had started to use so many years before.

"Even if you will marry the princess and I will have to go back to Berk, please don't ever forget me. That's all I'm asking for"

"I could never forget you" he said with a broken voice "I will never stop loving you no matter the distance, let alone forget you. Just because we can't be together it doesn't mean we cannot love each other, Astrid"

Her eyes were clouded by tears and she blinked to forbid them to escape.

"I love you, Hic"

"I love you too"

>With a heavy sigh she stood up. She pointed an accusatory finger at the dragons "You two better get used to the idea Hic and I are not getting married anymore"<p>

This made them produce guttural noises.

"It will take time, Astrid"

She shrugged "Stubborn" she muttered. Toothless licked her skirt "Toothless!" she shrieked "You damn Night Fury!"

The dragon smiled at her and she shook her head with a smirk.

Just then they heard a noise and they all turned to see Merida standing there.

For a moment Hiccup feared she might have seen them together but her expression said otherwise.

"Hi" she said almost timidly "Can I please talk to you, Hiccup?"

Astrid fidgeted "Uh... I'll go" she said "Your highness. Hic. Sleep well, guys" with one last kiss on Stormfly's head and a scratch under Toothless' chin the girl turned and walked away.

Hiccup smiled awkwardly as Merida sat beside him. Toothless hissed, showing his teeth.

"Sorry" Hiccup said "He's not usually like this. I don't know what's wrong with him"

Merida raised an eyebrow "I think I do"

He widened his eyes "Y-you do?"

The corners of her lips curled up "I've seen you and Astrid"

His breath caught "You w-wha... s-sorry...?"

Merida laughed rendering him speechless.

Then out of her mouth came words he would have never expected "It's okay, Hiccup"

"M-Merida what are you-?"

She placed a hand on his mouth and he blushed. He was not used to having girls that weren't Astrid so close.

"Now you'll listen to me" she ordered.

He nodded as she removed her hand.

"Look" she began "Don't take it personally but I don't want to marry you. Okay I mean... that came out wrong. I don't want to get married at all"

"Uhm.. ookay"

She laughed at his surprised expression and she told him the story of what had happened four years before.

He was shocked.

"My mother said I've had time to find an husband" Merida continued "but seeing as I couldn't find one, now I have to marry you. She said the peace treat with your tribe is a perfect excuse"

She sighed "It's not like I didn't look for someone. It's just... nobody seems to understand my need of freedom"

Hiccup stared at the walls of the stables "So... you don't want to... marry me?"

"If you're trying to find a connection between my choices and yours and Astrid's missed wedding then... there's none"

He looked in her intense blue eyes and he could see she was sincere.

"I'm sorry this ruined your lives"

He swallowed "It's not... your fault, Merida"

"It is, indirectly" she muttered.

He looked down at her: her red eyebrows were knitted together. She had her chin on her hand and her look was lost.

He didn't know much about this girl. Despite her royal family she seemed pretty tough and brave. She kinda reminded him of Astrid, strong and independant.

He nudged her "Hey, I'm serious"

She looked up and he smiled at her sadly. She returned his smile.

"We're pretty messed up, uh?" she joked.

"Yeah. You could say that"

* * *

><p>This is it, I hope you enjoyed the chapter!

**Let's see how reviews I can get before the next update
;)**

~Clary Chase

5. A broken team

**Hey guys! Here you have chapter 5. **

**Maybe it's a little short, hopefully chapter 6 will be longer
:)**

~Clary Chase

* * *

><p>"Stoick!"<p>

Gobber got off the ship with a loud _tank!_ of his fake leg and went to hug his friend.

Astrid watched as Hookfang, Meatlug, Barf and Belch and Skullcrusher rushed toward their riders excitedly.

She watched her friends hold onto their necks with big smiles.

How she wished she could be happy like them.

The royals seemed intimidated by the dragons, probably due to their meeting with Stormfly and Toothless who had been anything but kind.

Hiccup stepped forward and hugged Gobber tightly "How are ya, Hic?" he asked.

Hiccup shrugged "Good, I guess"

Gobber gave him a sympathetic smile and turned around to find Astrid staring at them.

"Astrid" he called her in a fatherly tone.

She smiled slightly and accepted his awkward hug "Everything alright?"

She nodded.

"Your majesties" Stoick said "This is Gobber, my blacksmith and dearest friend"

Gobber shook everyone's hands politely "Hiccup worked with him til the age of fifteen"

"He worked?" Elinor asked with her lips pursed.

"He was kinda my apprentice" Gobber said "Well, sometimes I actually babysat him"

Merida chuckled and Hiccup smiled at her, biting his lip.

Astrid watched them confused. They had been really close all morning, as if the night before, when she had left them alone in the stables, something had clicked between them.

Maybe they had... kissed?

Was it possible?

No, of course not. Hiccup would have surely told her. Right?

She shook those insane thoughts away and focused on Skullcrusher who was nudging her side.

She narrowed her eyes. The dragon had always looked a little bit scary, no wonder he was Stoick's dragon, but she found him kind cute in his own way.

She petted him "Hey, buddy"

After five years of being with Hiccup, his father's dragon was somewhat part of her family.

Elinor, along with Stoick and Fergus went to show Gobber the castle and the guys were taken away by the triplets who wanted to show them some kind of game.

"Hiccup and I are going to take a walk" Merida said awkwardly "Do you want to join us?"

Even though the question was being posed to both her and Ruffnut, the princess' gaze didn't leave Astrid.

She swallowed trying not to look at Hiccup "Oh, well, we wouldn't want to introduce, your highness"

Ruffnut narrowed her eyes "Yeah, she's right"

"No, really. It is no big deal. I would have never asked you otherwise"

"Yes, why don't you come?" there was hope in Hiccup's voice when he spoke up.

Astrid glared at him as if to say _'don't make this harder for me'_

"Really, maybe another time" she said, even if she knew there would have never been another time "Ruff and I will be in the forest with our dragons if we're not back before dinner"

They both bowed and the seemingly disappointed princess.

"Your highness"

"Please, call me Merida"

Astrid was taken aback from the sentence. Merida's blue eyes bore into hers and she felt a weird urge to look away.

Unable to say anything else she nodded and called Stormfly with a whistle.

The dragon dropped the game she was playing with Toothless and rushed to her side.

"If my brother asks, Barf and Belch are with me, Hic" Ruff said before turning away.

"Sure", the disappointment in Hiccup's voice was audible and Astrid groaned, walking away with big steps.

* * *

><p>"I just don't understand" Merida muttered looking down "I was trying to be nice. I wanted to make you two have some time together even if not alone. Why did she say no?"<p>

Hiccup shrugged " Astrid isn't what you call... a simple girl. Everything is hard with her and most of the time you actually don't know what she's feeling or what she's thinking about. It must have been hard for her, she's not used to people being this polite and helpful to her, us Vikings are not known for our kindness, you know?"

She laughed and the sound brought a smile to his lips "But really, Merida. Don't take it personally. It must have been weird for her. She glared at me as if to tell me not to make it harder when I spoke up"

Merida's smile was full of fondness and also a little guilt "You know her really well"

It wasn't a question, and Hiccup fidgeted "You learn to know every gaze and gesture of a person after being with them for five years"

* * *

><p>"Why did he have to look at me with those damn big eyes! I wanted to slap him so hard and make him forget his own name!" Astrid threw her axe in a tree and Ruff flinched.<p>

She hadn't seen her that angry many times and an angry Astrid with an axe in her hands was even more terrifying than the Red Death.

She didn't say anything, just let the blonde keep on screaming and swinging her weapon with frustrated grunts.

Sooner or later she would have calmed down so that they could talk quietly.

Hopefully.

"And what did she think she were doing inviting us to have that damn walk with them? 'Call me Merida', what the heck?! Why would I call her with her first name? I'm sure she may be nice but still... she stole my man! Maybe unintentionally but... she did! You know what? I'm gonna move on!"

Ruffnut watched her fall on the grass with a grunt with an amused grin "Are you finished?"

"Maybe"

"You said something like this before we came here. You're not gonna move on"

Astrid glared at her "That's where you're wrong!" she exclaimed "I am gonna move on. I can't keep on thinking of Hiccup when I can't have him anymore making my whole life miserable. I'm a warrior, not a stupid lady who needs to be rescued by a prince in shining armor and I won't be whining about how horrible my life is in this moment"

Ruff bit her lip "Yeah well... maybe this change will happen in a little while, uh?"

"For once you're right"

She lied down and crossed her arms on her belly "I just... I thought my life was perfect. We were going to get married, everybody approved our relationship, Hiccup would have become a chief and the village would have loved him. It sounds so sugary and banal but for once I really wanted this life. A married life, raising a family, having kids..."

Ruff watched her blue eyes fill with little tears "He would have wanted two girls, you know? He always said they would both have blonde hair like me and his green eyes because, I quote 'you have to admit my eyes are stunnigly attractive!'"

Ruff laughed at her impersonation and Astrid joined her.

Before she knew it she was stroking her hair "It will be alriight. You know, you're both stubborn, I'm sure something weird will happen and you two will end together"

"Ruff, please-"

"No seriously! And if it doesn't, I will disguise my dragon and make him kidnap Hiccup. Then I would hide him from the rest of the world except from you and you two could live together in secret and have beautiful kids with blonde hair and green eyes"

"I knew it was a bad idea to tell you that"

"Astrid, I'm serious"

Astrid looked up at her "It pains me to see you two pretending everyhting is okay when it's not. It pains all of us. And believe me, the guys and I would do anything to make you two be together once again"

"Ruff, are you actually... being kind with me?"

"Don't tell anyone. Especially not my brother"

She heard Astrid laugh "Sure sure"

Just then they heard frantic steps and a guard appeared "My ladies, your presence is requested at the castle!"

* * *

><p>"I will not let my friends go alone on this quest!" Hiccup shouted shaking his shoulders "If there's a dragon attacking villages we all have to be there. We're a team. We always do everything together!"<p>

"You're not a team anymore. In a few weeks they'll go back home and you'll be staying here. It's time you realise you have to let them go, you won't work together anymore"

Merida flinched at her mother's cold words. Astrid was watching her with half-closed eyes that sparkled with anger under her blonde bangs.

Hiccup deliberately ignored her and turned to his father "Dad, you know this could be dangerous. We work together as one, it won't be the same without Toothless and me. Please"

Stoick shook his head, disconsolate "I'm sorry, son" was all he said.

Hiccup groaned and stormed out.

"Maybe you should go after him, Mer" her father suggested.

Merida narrowed her eyes "I don't know how to handle an angry Hiccup, honestly. Maybe someone who knows him better should go. Astrid, maybe?"

Astrid looked at her like she had grown two heads, then she shook her head "It's better if we leave him alone for a while. He doesn't like people around when he's upset"

Elinor pursed her lips "How do you-"

"Go on, guys. Let's go get ready"

She turned on her heels and walked out of the room without another word, followed by her friends and with her head high, just like a real leader.

* * *

><p>Hiccup tried hard not to yell at the queen and his father for not letting him go as he watched his friends adjust their weapons.<p>

"They will be alright" Gobber said approaching him "I didn't train the six of you for nothing"

He sighed "I'm just not used to sit around while others are risking their lives. Especially not them. This is not how we do it back in Berk"

Gobber didn't say anything, he just patted his shoulder.

Hiccup took a deep breath and stepped forward.

He went to stand beside Astrid just as she hopped on Stormfly "Hey" he said.

"Hey" she gave him a light smile "Everything is gonna be fine, Hic"

He bit his lip and glanced at her axe worriedly "Is your axe gonna be enough of a weapon?"

She smiled "She has never betrayed me in battle, of course it is"

He bent down and took his fire sword from his suit "Take this"

Astrid widened her eyes "Hiccup, no. This is your weapon"

"And I'm giving it to you. I taught you how to use it"

She blushed, probably remembering the afternoon they had spent on the Itchy Armit using it.

"I can't. What if you need a weapon while I'm gone?"

"I'll use a normal sword. Please, Astrid"

She sighed and took it "Alright, you win. If this makes you feel better"

He smiled and laced his fingers with her slender ones and Astrid flushed red.

He didn't care that the queen and the king were watching him carefully, all he wanted to do was take her off the saddle and embrace her, kissing her senseless.

He brushed his lips against her hand "Be safe, milady" he whispered the nickname so that the royals wouldn't hear it.

Astrid squeezed his shoulder and Hiccup looked at his friends "Keep an eye on her. You know she's reckless"

They laughed and Astrid snorted, rolling her eyes "Let's go, guys!"

In a matter of seconds they were high up in the clouds.

Hiccup stood there watching the dragons disappear, his gaze particularly focused on the blue shadow that was leading them all.

* * *

><p>Here you go! Hope you liked it.

****As always, please review ;) ****

****Let's see if we can reach at least 40 reviews before the next update... maybe even more! ****

6. Wounded

****Here you go with chapter 6.****

****Hope you enjoy.****

****~Clary Chase****

*** * ***

><p>As they got more far away from the town the wheather started to get colder.<p>

Astrid could hear her friends' teeth chattering faintly at her sides.

She wrapped the furs tightly around her body and leaned in a little bit more, trying to take some of the warmth Stormfly's body radiated.

"Damn scottish cold" Tuffnut muttered.

"It's cold in Berk as well, you idiot" Ruffnut made him notice.

He opened his mouth and blinked stupidly "But... well, this is a different kind of cold, okay?"

"Why can you only say idiocies?" Snotlout said.

"Wait"

They all stopped upon hearing Astrid's voice "For once, Tuff is right"

Tuffnut stuck his tongue out at his sister who snorted.

"Maybe it has something to do with what I saw at the village that was attacked" Fishlegs blurted out.

Astrid turned to him with a frown "What do you mean?"

The big blonde scratched the back of his neck "Oh, well. None of you were really looking but... there were no signs of burns or fire attacks. Sure the houses were destroyed but no ashes on the ground, only something icy blue"

"_Icy_? Is there a dragon that breathes ice?"

"I don't know. At least, I've never heard of it, but we don't know every single species"

Astrid felt a shiver along her spine.

What could she say?

Hiccup would have known what to say. He was the leader when it came to dragons, the one with most of the answers.

"Mh" she bit her lip "I say we go on and see what we find. We can't come back at the castle with nothing in our hands"

The others nodded.

They always obeyed to her. She didn't see herself as a leader.

Stoick always said she was a born leader.

Hiccup would always say that once chief, he would've made her his second in command.

She would laugh, saying she couldn't be his wife and second in command at the same time and he would respond she could as long as it was the chief who ordered that.

It was almost half an hour after and they found themselves in what looked like a wild land.

It was all gray, no woods or houses, just lands of dead grass.

No, not dead. Iced.

"This doesn't look well" Snotlout mumbled.

"No, it certainly doesn't" Astrid agreed.

"Look!" Ruff exclaimed pointing at something on the ground beneath them.

Astrid looked better and she could finally see a Monstrous Nightmare.

"What is he doing?" Tuff asked.

The poor beast was moving in circles, almost like it had a kind of tick.

His moves were frantic.

"Maybe he has a problem"

With a silent agreement they descended and got off their dragons.

"I'll handle him" she said.

No one objected.

"Hey, buddy" she called taking careful steps towards the dragon with her hand held up.

The dragon's big head snapped in her direction and she almost gasped.

His eyes were thin lines, but they weren't like when dragons were angry.

They were empty, abnormal.

She bit her lip.

"Astrid" Ruffnut whispered "Maybe this is not a good idea"

Astrid shook her head.

"She's right" Fishlegs said "Come on, Astrid. This isn't normal, let's go back"

"No, I can do this"

She was resolute. She could do it without anyone's help.

"Hey, it's okay" she said in a soothing tone "We're here to help you"

The dragon growled and bared his teeth.

"Astrid, come back here!"

She turned to her friends and the dragon grabbed her arm with his claws.

"_ASTRID_!"

Astrid screamed as the Nightmare lifted her into the air and took flight.

She could hear her friends' panicked screams and she saw Stormfly hissing and launching herself in the air, following the dragon.

Some of her spines flew in the air and managed to dig in the Nightmare's skin.

They were flying at the speed of the light and soon she came into view of a massive cave in the middle of nowhere.

Packs of ice covered it.

The Nightmare introduced itself in a very well hidden hole and Stormfly did as well.

"_They'll never find me here_" she thought bitterly.

The dragon's claws were digging in her bare skin making it bleed.

They finally reached the inside of the cave. It was dark and empty.

The Nightmare threw her to the ground and Astrid hit her head, hard.

She whined and the dragon hit her leg with its tail, cutting deep through her leggings.

She screamed in pain and tears started to fill her eyes.

Why was that dragon acting that way?

Just before it could hit her again Stormfly jumped in front of her and roared, hiding Astrid protectively between her big legs.

The Nightmare opened its mouth and just then it was thrown to the ground by two enormous wings.

No, they weren't two. They were four.

A dragon with four wings?

A shadow got off the big dragon that had suddenly appeared.

It was a human-like shadow and Astrid gripped Stormfly's leg to keep herself from falling.

Was she dreaming everything?

The rider smacked a huge staff in the Nightmare's head and its eyes rolled in its head as he fell down.

Astrid's legs felt like jelly.

Her head was spinning and her arm and leg throbbed dangerously.

The rider approached her with cat-like moves.

A hand came into her blurry view. It was clearly a human hand.

It was slender, with long and calloused fingers.

"Are you okay?"

It was a feminine voice.

But was it real?

Or was it her imagination?

After all she had hit her head.

She barely had the strength to shake her head.

The last thing she saw before passing out were green eyes.

Hiccup's eyes.

* * *

><p>Stoick was in the front garden with Gobber, Elinor and Fergus.<p>

They were chatting but his mind was somewhere else, along with his riders.

He wished he could object with what the queen decided but he was

always reluctant, fearing her reaction.

He had never felt so weak in his life, he wanted to punch something.

"Ah!" Gobber's voice caught his attention "Our kids are back"

He looked up to see the familiar shapes of the dragons nearing the castle.

He made a strangled sound when he saw no silhouette on Stormfly's back.

"Where's Astrid?"

Gobber shook his head, eyes wide with worry.

As soon as they landed he rushed over.

"Uncle Stoick!" Snotlout yelled, almost panicked.

Stoick went to the Nadder and found Astrid lying on her back.

His heart sank as he took in her appearance.

Her leggings were ripped and a deep cut ran from her left thigh to her ankle.

Her arm was cut as well, it looked like something had dug in her flesh.

A fatherly impulse overwhelmed him as he swept the girl in his arms.

"What happened?" he asked running towards the castle.

"A Nightmare. It was weird, Stoick!" Fishlegs explained.

Elinor gasped and covered her mouth with her hand when he reached them.

"Is she...?"

"No" he deadpanned.

Her heart was still working. He could feel the faint beat.

"We need healers. Good healers. Immediately"

"This way"

* * *

><p>Hiccup had no more breath when he barged into the room.<p>

They all turned to him as he crawled to the bed, tears streaming down his face.

He hadn't cried in such a long time.

"Astrid" he choked out sitting next to her.

Her face was pale and gaunt, her golden locks sprawled on the pillow.

She was still, completely covered, and he could only imagine her wounds under the sheets.

His friends had told him what had happened on his way there but the only thing he could register was the fact that his beloved was badly hurt.

He didn't care he was surrounded by everyone, he placed his head on Astrid's chest and sobbed.

He heard the queen hold her breath, probably indignant by that intimate gesture.

Then he heard his father's voice "Please, leave us"

Steps echoed in the room and when the door was closed he knew they were alone.

"It's all my fault" he cried straightening a bit.

The chair at the side of the bed creaked under his father's weight.

"No, it's my fault" he said "It was my decision in the first place. I should've said no, found another way to make this peace. You two were supposed to get married"

Hiccup shook his head "I don't blame you, dad. Nor does Astrid. It was just... unluck. You did what was best for Berk"

"Family should come before duty"

He bit his lip, not knowing what to say.

He looked down at Astrid's sleeping face.

She was beautiful even wounded and in her sleep.

He brushed blonde bangs out of her closed eyes and rested a hand on the side of her neck.

He felt a lump in his throat and gritted his teeth.

"I should have been there for her"

His father said nothing.

"She's so goddamn stubborn. Why did she have to try and tame that dragon?"

"You influenced her"

Hiccup sighed "I guess this is what she felt like when I was out when I lost my leg"

Stoick patted his shoulder and stood up "Well, we just hope she won't be out for five days like you"

Hiccup took his father's hand and squeezed it "Thanks, dad"

Stoick swallowed and he could read the unspoken words in his green eyes '_What for?_'

The chief only nodded "I'll leave you alone with her, I'll talk with the queen"

"Thank you. It means a lot"

"What should I tell... Merida?"

"Oh, nothing. She will understand"

His dad frowned and Hiccup waved his hand dismissively "Trust me"

"Uhm... okay. Call if you need anything. Goodnight, son"

"Night, dad"

When the door was closed once again Hiccup looked out of the window.

It was starting to get dark.

He took off his boots and prosthetic and plopped on the chair.

He reached out and took Astrid's hand.

It was weirdly cold and unmoving but her tapering fingers fit perfectly with his.

He leaned in and placed a gentle kiss on her forehead.

"Goodnight, milady"

* * *

><p>Pleasee review!

I see many of you follow this story so please let me know what you think, it would mean SO much to me!

Thank you!

7. Not a Viking

Hi guys!

First of all, thank you to Nerdmom1701 for making me notice my mistake in the previous chapter. I wanted to write 'passing out' but my hand slipped. Oops!

Your reviews made me so happy, thank you all!

****Here you go with chapter 7, I hope you'll enjoy it!****

****Clary Chase****

* * *

><p>The door opened slowly and Hiccup looked up to see Merida closing it behind her and leaning on the wall.<p>

She looked from Astrid's sleeping form to him "Did you sleep at all?" she asked.

He shrugged "Sleeping isn't exactly my priority right now"

The princess stepped forward and sat on the armrest.

"My mother's been asking... things" she blurted out.

"What kind of things?"

"Well, she wonders why you care so much about her, for example"

"What sort of quest-"

"Relax. But you need to admit it, your behavior last night was quite ambiguous. She asked me if you two were ever together"

"And...?"

"I just told her you two have been friends since you were little kids"

"Thanks, Mer"

"Anytime" she said shrugging, though she blushed a little at the nickname "But you need to be more careful next time. She has an hawk's eye. Now yesterday you were justified seeing she was on the verge of dying from blood loss"

Hiccup flinched just at the mere thought of Astrid dying.

Merida stood up "Wanna come down to breakfast?"

"No, thanks. I'm not hungry, tell everyone I'm sorry"

"It's okay"

The princess' blue gaze fixed on Astrid. It seemed like she wanted to say something but in the end she turned and left.

* * *

><p>When Astrid opened her eyes they were instantly hurt by the intense light.<p>

For a moment her vision was fuzzy.

She knew she was in a bed, she could feel soft covers and pillows surrounding her.

Her head was throbbing and her arm and leg were stinging.

There was a movement beside her and she looked around, alarmed.

"Hey"

She sighed and relaxed when she was met with Hiccup's gentle eyes.

"Hey" she croaked as he took her hand.

He placed a kiss on her palm and then rested his cheek on it.

She brushed her fingers on his cheekbone in a tender way.

"You had me worried sick" he said.

"Sorry. What happened?"

"_I_ should ask _you_ what happened. The guys went back with you bleeding to death, unconscious"

"Ah... right"

"Mind telling me your side of the story?"

She did.

In the meanwhile Hiccup ran his hand on her bandaged arm, his piercing and serious gaze on her.

When she was finished he pursed his lips "I don't know, Astrid..."

"What?"

"You hit your head. And pretty badly. Tonight your fever was so high that you whined for almost an hour despite the cold cloth I put on your forehead"

"What are you trying to say, Hiccup?" she snapped snatching her hand away from his grip.

"I just... maybe it's your head doing some... ugh look-"

"Are you saying I imagined it?!" she yelled "Because it was all real. The Nightmare. The fight. And most of all the dragon rider!"

Hiccup looked at loss of words. He fidgeted with his hands in his lap.

Astrid glared at him "If you don't want to believe me-"

"I do want to believe you! Really. But as far as we know we're the only dragon riders"

"You're right. _As far as we know_" she retorted crossing her arms and flinching a bit.

Hiccup rolled his eyes "I'm not saying... you know it's..." he groaned and sat swiftly on the bed, capturing her lips.

She narrowed her eyes and pushed him away "You think kissing me will make me forget everything?"

"Probably" he said with an esitant grin, but when her glare only intensified he bit his lip.

"Look, Astrid. I don't want to talk about this now. I'm tired and still shocked from yesterday. I just want to spend some time with you now that I can do it"

"Don't you have somewhere to be?"

"Not really. Merida told her mother that we've been friends since we were kids so I have a good excuse to be so worried and stay up here with you"

Astrid was taken aback. Why would Merida do that?

She wanted to ask him but her thoughts vanished as Hiccup climbed on the bed and stood on his elbows not to crush her with his weight.

He leaned down and kissed her temple "I love you" he murmured in her ear.

She shivered at his closeness and her hands came to wrap around the back of his neck "The door..." she said "Someone could see us"

"It's already locked"

With that he pressed his lips on hers and the world around them was nothing but a distant dream.

They moved softly against hers and their slow dance was so familiar that it was almost heartbreaking.

Astrid gripped Hiccup's narrow shoulders, digging her fingers in his vest. She kissed him passionately trying to savour the moment, to ingrave the feeling of his body pressed against hers.

His lips moved to her neck and she let out a deep breath, tangling her fingers in his brown hair.

"I will prove you wrong" she said "I will... make you see... the rider"

Hiccup hummed against her throat and she knew he didn't believe her and he wouldn't let her go another time.

She knew him very well to recognise the signs of when he didn't want to keep on talking about something.

When he pulled away his eyes were darker than usual "You probably need to rest"

She shook her head "I've been resting for a day. I'm fine"

"Then maybe I should leave you some time alone"

"No. Just... lie down with me for a while?"

He smiled lightly and pressed a tender kiss to her forehead.

He pulled her to his chest careful not to touch her wounds and she placed her head in the crook of his neck.

Hiccup stroked her hair and whispered sweet words in her ear.

She tried to focus on his breath against her neck and his low voice but her mind by now was somewhere else.

That night she would have gone to the cave.

And Hiccup wouldn't be able to stop her.

* * *

><p>It was almost midnight when Astrid reached the stables with light steps, limping, with her bandaged arm clutched to her chest.<p>

Stormfly was up while the other dragons were fast asleep, snoring loudly.

As soon as she saw her she let out an happy squeak and rushed to her.

"Hey girl!" Astrid smiled hugging her with her good arm "You were worried about me?"

The dragon nudged her affectionally and she scratched her chin.

"I need you to take me to that cave" she whispered.

Stormfly whined gesturing to her arm "I'm fine, Stormfly. Really. I need you to take me there"

The dragon huffed and Astrid rolled her eyes "Oh, come on, girl. Do this for me. Please?"

Stormfly looked at her with her yellow eyes half-closed and then sighed, lowering to make her rider climb on her back.

"You're awesome!" Astrid patted her neck trying to balance herself.

The flight was slow due to her gripping the saddle with only one hand and Stormfly's overprotective side showing.

They were flying above the land where they had found the Nightmare when Stormfly suddenly hissed, snapping her head from one side to the other.

"Stormfly" Astrid called "What's wrong, girl?"

The answer came just one second after, when the large four-winged dragon appeared from the clouds below.

Astrid cried in fear steadying herself on the saddle.

The dragons wings were huge, probably twice a Nadder's size.

Its face reminded Astrid of an howl, with large yellow and clever eyes.

The misterious rider was standing upright on the dragon's back and she scanned the weird outfit.

A weird suit made of leather and a little fur cloak.

But the most weird and disturbing detail was a huge blue mask with long horns.

The shield and long staff the rider was clutching weren't welcoming either.

Astrid narrowed her eyes as the staff was pointed directly to her. Then in a matter of seconds the rider was flying away.

"Stormfly, follow them!" she ordered.

The dragon didn't esitate this time and they soon reached the icy cave.

They followed the dragon on the inside and landed in the open-space where the Nightmare had attacked Astrid.

"Stay put, Stormfly" the girl ordered.

The rider jumped off the huge dragon and smacked the staff on the ground.

Suddenly thousands of dragon's mouths lit up with fire and Astrid let out a strangled sound.

Stormfly crutched next to her and hissed.

"Who are you?" Astrid asked mirroring the rider's circular moves.

When she received no answer she exclaimed "Do you understand what I'm saying? Why did you save me? Where do you come from? Why was that Nightmare acting that way?"

A light chuckle came from the under the mask and Astrid swallowed.

"So many answers, uh?"

It was definetely a female voice.

It was smooth, with a weird accent that reminded her of Stoick's or Gobber's ones.

The rider removed her mask and Astrid was surprised by the beautiful face that had been hiding behind it.

The rider couldn't be much younger than her own parents. She had a long face, with sharp cheekbones and thick eyebrows. Her brown hair was braided in a complicated way.

But the most gorgeous thing were her eyes. They were forest green.

They reminded Astrid of Hiccup's ones so much that it was almost painful to hold her gaze.

"Who are you?" she repeated.

The four-winged dragon hissed and so did the other dragons surrounding them.

The woman gestured for her hand "You better lower your axe, my dragons don't like weapons"

Astrid bit her lip and the rider let her staff fall to the ground "I'm not gonna hurt you" she promised.

She didn't know what she was doing.

She shouldn't have lowered her axe so easily.

But something about the woman's gentle voice and her big eyes made her trust her.

She reached for Stormfly's saddle and placed the weapon on it.

"That's better" the rider said "To answer your first question, my name is Valka"

"Valka? That's a viking name" Astrid reasoned.

Valka seemed esitant for a moment "I'm not a Viking" she said "Who are you, girl? I've never met another dragon rider before"

Astrid wanted to tell her there were tons of them but something stopped her.

"My name's Astrid. Astrid Hofferson" she only said.

Valka let out a little gasp, as if her name reminded her of someone, but she quickly recomposed herself "Beautiful name"

"Thank you" Astrid said with a frown "Now, may I ask you why you saved me and where-"

"There will be time for questions" Valka said picking up her staff once again "But first, come with me"

* * *

><p>Aaand there you go!

What do you think? Liked it?

**Please keep on sending me reviews, they make me happy and stimulate

me more to write the next chapter!**

Til next update! :)

8. The sanctuary

You guys don't know how much I love you! 16 review for last chapter, let's see if we can reach 90 with this one!

This is a little long. I know many of you wanted an angry Hiccup when he discovers Astrid was out but I wanted some bonding time between the girls in here.

In the next chapter there will be some little drama between Hiccup and Astrid.

evil laughter

Enjoy!

Clary Chase

* * *

><p>Valka moved with ease and agility throught the rock tunnels as if she had done it thousands of times. Which she had probably done.<p>

Astrid tried not to yell at the feral lady as she tripped once again on a rock and getting eased back on her feet by Stormfly who was following her close behind.

I want answers, that's why I'm doing this, she thought scrolling her shoulders.

Valka disappeared in a black hole and Astrid panicked.

"Hey!" she yelled.

She rushed forward and ran into the hole as well.

Light hit her and she whined, covering her eyes.

"What the-"

She blinked and gasped in surprise.

She was in a sort of dome. The ceiling was made of ice and all around her, trees, meadows of green grass and flowers.

She was standing not so far from a cliff and dragons of every species and sizes were flying around.

She widened her eyes "Frigga!" she exclaimed "This is amazing"

She heard a laugh beside her and turned to find Valka smiling, crouched on one of her dragon's wings.

"You like it?" she asked getting off and taking esitant steps in her

direction.

Astrid shook her head in disbelief "It's stunning. What is this place?"

"A dragons sanctuary" the woman explained "There are a few sprawled in the lands the men know. They are made to be a safe shelter for dragons in need, even if I don't know how they came to exist. Mine is actually really similar to this"

"Yours?" Astrid looked at her with a curious gaze.

"Aye" Valka said "I come from a land far from here. There I have my own sanctuary where I have gathered all kinds of dragons in these past twenty years"

She pointed her staff down and Astrid neared the edge of the cliff.

"Oh my gods!" she yelled stumbling back "What is that?"

Valka smiled tenderly at the giant white beast that was settled comfortably in water and grass "That is the Bewilderbeast, the Alpha of the dragons of the lands I come from"

Astrid frowned in confusion and decided to sit down. Her legs were shaking dangerously.

"I don't get it, Valka" she said watching her sit in a weird position some feet away from her. She almost reminded her of a cat.

"What don't you get?" she stroked her dragon's nose and looked at her with her eyebrows raised "Time for questions has come, you're allowed to ask what you want, but I can't promise you I'll be able to answer all of them"

Astrid nodded "If you're from a different land, then how come are you here?"

Valka pursed her lips "The Bewilderbeast decided to move in here almost a week ago. It's weird because I expected to find another alpha here, every sanctuary has one but... none. We settled in here and some of my dragons followed us here"

"Why has it moved?"

"I don't know. It was all so sudden. But I suspect something dark and big going on in these lands"

Great, Astrid thought, _because I really need more dark and big things in my life right now_.

"I just know it must something important for my alpha to move up here"

"Why did that Nightmare attack me like that? With no reason? I've dealt with other dragons before and he was abnormal, his eyes were empty"

She watched the woman's green eyes darken as she looked at her giant

beast.

"I don't know, Astrid. I have my doubts but... I'm not sure. I'll do some searches in these lands"

"I'll help you" Astrid blurted and instantly blushed at her weird and sudden proposal.

What was she saying?

A little part of her mind told her she was proposing to go with her because she truly cared of what was happening, while the other, meaner and darker, was suggesting she was just looking for an excuse to stay away from Hiccup and Merida.

Valka scrutinized her with her green eyes half-closed "Are you sure you want to do this? It will be dangerous"

"I'm not afraid of a little adventure" she deadpanned "Hic and- I mean, I've done things like exploring new lands before. I'm prepared for anything"

The feral woman was still watching her with a doubtful look "Astrid is a viking name"

"It is. I am a Viking"

Valka bit her lip "Vikings don't trust dragons so easily, even less people who befriend dragons"

"I am one of a kind" Astrid only said.

She didn't want to tell everyone in Berk had a dragon. At least not yet.

If she did, Valka would have probably wanted to know the one person who had made everybody change their minds, and she wasn't ready for that.

She wanted to have a little adventure on her own, no one that she knew involved.

Maybe she was a little selfish, but she didn't care.

She was allowed to have a little happiness, right?

"What do you say, Cloudjumper?" Valka said scratching her dragon's chin "Do we want her with us?"

Cloudjumper did what looked like a smile and blinked with her owl-like eyes and Valka laughed turning to her "I think that was a yes"

Astrid smiled "It'll be an honor but... can I ask you a few more things?"

"One condition"

"Yes?"

"I'll get to ask you some things as well"

The girl bit her lip "Like you said, I don't know if I'll be able to answer to all of them"

The woman grinned "You're a smart one, are you?" she said.

She leaned on the balls of her feet and nodded "Go on"

Astrid took a breath "Where do you come from?"

Valka clenched her jaw "I can't answer this"

"But-"

"Please" she said closing her eyes briefly.

Astrid was surprised by her reaction "Okay. But at least tell me, did you have a family?"

This question seemed to hurt her even more and the woman didn't meet her gaze "Why do you want to know this?"

"I need to know at least something about the woman I am helping, don't you think?"

Astrid didn't mean to sound rude. But the feral dragon-lady fascinated her a lot. She was beautiful, in her village she would have probably caught most men's attention.

She had had to be raised somewhere and if she didn't want to say where, Astrid would've at least found out something about the life she was leading before.

She had said 'past twenty years' and seeing she was probably around her own parents' age, she must have lived almost half of her life between humans.

Valka sighed, she had a faraway look in her eyes when she spoke up "I did. I had a family. A husband and... a son"

Astrid narrowed her eyes "You had a son?" she asked "But... then why did you-"

"It all happened by accident" Valka said before the question could slip past her lips "There was an attack, I was out and when I came back into my house there was Cloudjumper playing with my son who was barely one year old. He looked at me and I esitated to kill him because I had seen he wasn't a vicious beast. My husband jumped in and took our son. Cloudjumper wasted no time and took me away"

Astrid was still confused "But why didn't you ever come back?"

"My native island is a land of '_kill or be killed_', Astrid. Dragons were always a problem but I never wanted to kill them. Everyone thought I was a freak"

"Your husband surely didn't, or else he would have never married you" Astrid said in a hard tone "And you had a little son. Wasn't this

enough to make you come back?"

Valka bit her lip "You speak as a young girl, when you'll have a family on your own you'll probably understand why I did it. I believed my family would have been safer without me. They could have been killed that night only because I couldn't kill a dragon"

Astrid looked at Cloudjumper.

Valka was so much like Hiccup. The two of them would've gotten along.

She thought about raising a family on her own and then leaving them but that thought only made her feel worse.

She didn't feel like judging a woman she barely knew.

Maybe Valka was right. She would have understood, eventually.

There was a moment of silence between the two women but it was comfortable.

It was Valka who broke it "What about you?" she asked "Why are you here?"

"Well, my chief's son is getting married with the princess of Dunbroch and he wanted some of his best warriors with him"

"You sound resentful. Don't you like being here?"

"Given the circumstances, no. I don't"

Valka must have sensed her despair and didn't push any other question on the topic.

Astrid was glad of it. She wasn't sure she could handle talking about the wedding without breaking down crying.

It was late in the night and her wounded limbs were complaining for not being rested in a comfortable bed.

"I think it's time for you to come back to the castle" Valka said.

Astrid nodded, tired, and stood up with Stormfly's help.

They made their way back into the tunnels in silence, Astrid crouched on her dragon's back.

When they were finally out it was darker then Astrid had expected.

"The sanctuary's light betrayed me"

Valka smiled "It's all a trick. The ice makes it look like there's always daylight" she patted Stormfly's wing affectionally "Will you be safe coming back on your own?"

Astrid could hear concern in her voice.

If her calculations were right according to her story, Valka's son had be her age.

The woman could be easily her mother.

She smiled down at her "I'll be fine" she said "Will I see you again?"

Valka nodded "I'll be here waiting for you. Recover, and then we'll go looking for what's troubling the dragons"

The idea thrilled Astrid "Then I'll see you in a few days, Valka"

"Have a good night, Astrid"

Stormfly was instantly in the sky.

The cold night wind chased back some of her tiredness, but it soon came crashing back down on her as soon as Astrid left Stormfly in the stables and tiptoed silently up the stairs.

She plopped down on her bed and closed her eyes.

That night, she dreamed of brighter days for her in those stranger and unwelcome lands.

* * *

><p>Hope you guys like it!

I'll try to post next chapter as soon as it's done!

REVIEW! :)

9. Breaking point

22 reviews for chapter 8? You guys are awesome! Thank you!

Enjoy chapter 9! :)

Clary Chase

* * *

><p>The morning after Astrid slept until late.<p>

Sleeping had been good for her injured arm and leg and she almost felt new.

When she woke up she lyed in bed staring at the wooden ceiling, thinking about all the things she had discovered in only one night.

She desperately wanted to know where Valka came from but she figured it would be long before she could find out.

The way the woman had gasped almost imperceptibly upon hearing her

name.

Her way too hard tone when she had said she wasn't a Viking.

It was like she held a grudge towards them that was far beyond their hatred for dragons. It was something deeper.

She shook those thoughts away and sat up.

There was a clean dress on the chair beside her bed and she quickly changed into it even though she found it extremely uncomfortable.

She surely had missed breakfast because she found a plate full of food on the window.

She didn't feel like eating so she hopped down the stairs.

The big dining room was full of troubled voices and she slowly pushed the doors open.

They all turned to look at her and she stood there awkwardly.

"ASTRID!" her friends yelled.

She barely had time to register what was happening before she surprisingly found herself wrapped in Ruffnut's arms.

"Ruff... can't... breath"

"Sorry" the other girl quickly pushed her away.

"Are you okay?" the others asked.

"I've been better" she said "But yes, I'm pretty good"

"Astrid"

The guys stepped aside and she found Stoick glncing down at her.

"I'm glad you're okay" he said with a little smile that told her thousands of things he couldn't express aloud.

She nodded biting her lip.

"Told ya she would be fine!" Gobber bellowed "She's a hard one ta kill!"

She smiled and made eye contact with Hiccup.

He was watching her with a straight face. Any sign of what had happened beetween the two of them the day before was completely erased.

"I was worried about you"

Surprisingly, Astrid saw it was Merida who had spoken.

She hadn't said we, but I.

Was that for real or was she just being a good host?

She couldn't know.

She had never been good at reading people, and the princess surely hid her emotions very well.

She nodded at her "Thanks for your concern, your majesty"

"We were actually talking about your quest" the king said "Would you tell us what happened?"

She bit the inside of her cheek and sat on the chair Gobber was holding out for her.

"Of course"

And she did.

She left out Valka saying Stormfly had took her out of the cave when she passed out.

Hiccup furrowed his eyebrows a bit at her omission, but said nothing.

"So basically you came back with empty hands" the queen said.

Her voice wasn't cold as usual, more concerned and maybe a little scared, but it still pissed Astrid off.

"It's not like I didn't do my best" she deadpanned.

Elinor looked up at her with an eyebrow raised and Hiccup gave her a side-glance as if to say _'do not make it worse'_.

"You surely did your best, but you didn't find out why the dragons attacked that village"

"One quest isn't enough to discover something this big"

"Maybe dragons just aren't friendly as you all think"

That made the Berserkers flinch a bit.

"You have no right to say such a thing!" Astrid exclaimed, clenching her fists.

The queen glared at her "Oh, but I do! Since, you know, your dragons clearly threatened my daughter _with no reason_!"

"MOTHER!" Merida shouted.

Astrid didn't know what she was doing.

All of her stress and resentment for the queen of Dunbroch came up and she stood up abruptly.

"Have you ever thought that _maybe_ they ****did**** have a reason to?"

The queen narrowed her brown eyes and opened her mouth, but no sound came out.

Astrid didn't wait for an answer, she turned on her heels and stormed out.

She could hear Stoick screaming her name but she didn't come back.

Her feet brought her to the stables where she plopped on the straw under Stormfy's wings.

Toothless saw her and crouched in front of her, placing his head in her lap.

She smiled sadly and scratched his chin "Hey, buddy"

"Are you insane?!" a way too familiar voice shouted.

She turned and glared at Hiccup "Excuse me?"

He stopped in front of her with heavy breaths "What in Thor's name did you think you were doing?" he yelled "'_Maybe they had a reason to_'! Are you trying to let them find out about us?!"

She pursed her lips "Excuse me if my stress and maybe tiny depression is getting over me and I snapped at the queen trying to defend _our_ dragons!"

"This has nothing to do with defending the dragons!" he threw his hands in the air "You were giving her your death stare since the beginning! She's just worried for her people's well-being. Try to be a little understanding!"

"Well, have you thought that maybe I don't want to be understanding with the woman that _ruined_ my life?!"

That made Hiccup bit his lip "She didn't know..."

"I don't care!" she shrieked, her eyes stinging "Are you defending them? What's gotten into you, Hiccup?"

"I'm just trying to fit in what will be my life from now on"

His sentence felt like a stab in her heart.

Astrid took a step back and looked away "I get it"

"Astrid-"

She looked at Toothless and said "How long has it been since Toothless' last flight"

"I don't know but it doesn't matter now, listen-"

"It doesn't matter?!" her voice was getting louder and louder but she couldn't care less "Hiccup he's your dragon! _Your best friend_! He was there way before all of them. Don't you think you owe him at least some flights?"

Hiccup looked a little guilty "I do, yes-"

"How long?" she repeated.

He rubbed the back of neck awkwardly "Five days?"

Astrid widened her eyes "_What_?"

"But look I've been-"

"That's it"

She hopped on Toothless' back and he warbled cheerfully.

"What do you think you're doing?" he asked with a sharp tone.

"Taking him flying" she stated.

"You don't know how to ride him"

She glanced down at him and said "Oh, yes I do. You taught me. Or have you forgotten that day already?"

A memory flashed in his eyes.

It had been two years before, they were eighteen.

He had taught her to ride Toothless and in the middle of their 'lesson' a storm had caught them.

They had taken refuge in a cave and warmed themselves up with the dragons' fire and kisses.

Their kisses had become more and more passionate and they had made love for the first time, lying on the pile of furs that were their clothes.

"Of course, not. I could never-"

She didn't let him finish.

She whistled "Come on, Stormfly!"

"Astrid!"

She spurred Toothless and the dragon took flight, followed by Stormfly.

Tears started to stream down her face but the wind quickly wiped them away.

* * *

><p>She didn't know how long she flew.<p>

She actually didn't even look where she was going.

Her limbs were screaming for a break and she knew it had been a bad

idea to go flying again after just one day.

That damn dress was the most uncomfortable thing she had ever worn.

To sit properly she had to pull up the gown and her bare legs were basically showing completely.

Not that there was any man on sight.

Toothless had brought her in one of the many desert lands near the sea.

They were flying above the rocky coast when she heard voices.

Human voices.

She looked down and saw a tiny boat docked in the bay.

"Fire!" she heard someone scream.

"Toothless!" she moved the dragon just in time not to be taken down by a flying nest.

Stormfly otherwise wasn't so lucky and she fell on the boat completely tangled in the ropes.

"Stormfly!" Astrid shrieked in panic.

She hurled herself down and landed heavily on the boat.

"Let her go!" she ordered swinging her axe.

Some of the men backed away, a little scared.

Toothless hissed and threw himself in front of Stormfly.

"Well, is that what I think it is?" a deep voice exclaimed.

She turned to see a young man around her age getting closer.

He was handsome, big and muscular. He had an olive skin and dark hair.

On his chin was tattooed a little beard and scars could be seen anywhere his clothes left his skin uncovered.

Ruffnut would've probably drooled over his biceps.

"Stay where you are!" she yelled holding up her weapon.

The man raised an eyebrow and grinned "A curious sight, isn't it, my fellows?" he said checking her out "A beautiful young lady in a silk dress riding a Night Fury and sided by a Deadly Nadder! Things are really weird up here"

Astrid glared at him "Who are you?"

The man slapped his forehead "Oh, where are my manners? I am Eret, son of Eret!" if the twins were there, they would have probably died

laughing from his name "Greatest dragon trapper ever!"

He pulled out his sword and pointed it at her.

Toothless hissed again and she put a hand on his head "Calm down, boy"

Eret scrolled his shoulders "Well, I'll give you that, you're a tough one, my lady" she flinched at the nickname Hiccup reserved for her "Not only you stole one of our dragons to devastate a village, but you also managed to catch a Night Fury and _tame_ it"

"What are you talking about?" she said "What village?"

"Oh, don't tell me it freezed over on its own" he said.

Astrid gasped in realisation.

He was accusing her of stealing one of their dragons.

Did that mean there was a Bewilderbeast like Valka's one?

"Well, I can let you go, sweetie. And the Nadder as well. But not the Night Fury. My master needs one of those"

"Your master?" she asked.

"Drago Bludvist" Eret said like it was obvious "He needs a dragon to ride to guide his dragon army and he's been looking for a Night Fury for so long"

Drago Bludvist. Dragon army.

So many information all in so little time.

Astrid's head was throbbing "I don't know who your master is, but he certainly won't have my dragon!"

The men laughed along with Eret.

"Drago always gets what he wants" he said in a calm tone and then yelled "Shoot them down!"

"Toothless!" she screamed "Plasma blast!"

The dragon aimed at the mast and let out one of his infamous blue plasma blasts.

The sailors yelled in terror as the mast crashed down and Astrid took the opportunity to cut the ropes that trapped Stormfly with her axe.

"Go, girl! GO!"

She herself jumped on Toothless and took flight.

"This isn't the end of it!" she herd Eret yell "Drago's coming for _every_ dragon!"

* * *

><p>Astrid's legs were shaking wildly.<p>

She wanted to go to Valka, to tell her what she had discovered but she was tired and shocked and going to the sanctuary meant she would have to show Toothless and answer the questions that would rise.

She had only one option: coming back to the castle.

It was late when she left the dragons in the stables and ran to her room.

She almost screamed in surprise when she found Hiccup pacing back and forth in front of her bed.

"Astrid!" he exclaimed when he saw her.

"What are you doing here?" she inquired in a skeptical tone.

He frowned "What do you mean? You've been away all day! I was out of mind with worry!"

She pushed past him and he took a step back "You had no reason to" she muttered.

He made a scorning sound "Oh, really?"

"Yes, really" she said staring at him as if to dare him to contradict her.

"Well, I think I have every right to be worried when you disappear in the middle of nowhere and to know where you have been since you're my-"

"Your?" she hissed "Your what, Hiccup?"

"You're still my girlfriend!" he exclaimed taking a step forward.

Astrid shoved him back "No, I'm not!" she yelled "You do have a girlfriend but that's not me anymore!"

For a moment Hiccup watched her with wide eyes.

Then he held up his hand to her face but she batted it away "Astrid, please" he whispered.

"You said you're trying to settle into this new life, right?" she said, not meeting his gaze "Well, so be it. I'm not part of this new life"

He flinched "Astrid-" he repeated.

"Go away" she ordered opening the door.

"Come on, babe. We can figure this out together-"

"I said go away!" she exploded pushing him out with one swift move.

She shut the door and leaned her back on it.

Hiccup pounded his fists on the door "Astrid, let me in. Let's talk about this. I love you more than anything else. I didn't mean any of that"

Astrid fought back a sob and shook her head "Well, I meant everything I said. Leave me alone, Hiccup"

There was a brief moment of silence.

Then, slowly, he stood up.

"I still love you though" he said in a small and hurt voice.

His room was just a few feet away and she heard his door open and close with a loud bang.

Astrid wrapped her arms around her legs and buried her face into them.

She started to cry silently and thousands of images danced in her mind.

"Just let me show you"

"That's for everything else"

"Why does everyone get to be happy but not us?!"

"Just because we cannot be together it doesn't mean we can't love each other"

"I'm not a Viking"

"Drago always gets what he wants"

Her head was spinning.

Her back slid down and she curled in a ball on the cold floor.

She closed her eyes and sleep seized her.

* * *

><p>Well, many of you wanted to see and angry Hiccup so there he is.

Writing my babies fight was one of the hardest things ever, you had been warned about the little drama!

What do you think of this chapter? Did you like it?

Let me know in a review!

Til next update!

****Hello guys!****

****I haven't mentioned it before but I think now it's more clear than ever that this story is gonna contain spoilers from HTTYD2.****

****To clear something up, the fight between Hiccup and Astrid wasn't exactly a break-up, also because, technically, they're not together anymore.****

****Thank you for your reviews! Let's see how many you leave til next chapter!****

****Love,****

****Clary Chase****

*** * ***

><p>One week passed.<p>

Astrid and Hiccup didn't talk to each other, which made the Vikings slightly nervous.

"I just don't get why she's been so hard" Hiccup complained throwing a rock in the lake.

Merida turned and cut him with a killer stare that reminded him so much of Astrid's one that he swallowed hard "What?"

"Are you kidding me?" she said.

He bit the inside of his cheek awkwardly "Uhm..." her frown deepened and he sighed leaning his back on a fallen tree "Okay. Illuminate me. What am I missing?"

Merida rolled her eyes and sent an arrow flying at the opposite bank of the lake "I thought you would be less dense with Astrid's feelings" she observed.

Hiccup blushed " i do get her feelings. I just don't understand why she's so hard all of a sudden!"

"Oh, come on, Hiccup!" the princess exclaimed waving an arrow in front of his face "It's a lot to take in. She's been attacked by a dragon and then you jump in telling her to be understanding with my mother, the woman who, as she said, ruined her life even if unintentionally!"

"But we could be together in secret! We'll be discovered if she keeps acting this way!"

"Use your brain, Hiccup!" Merida yelled "She's feeling used! I know that's not what you think of her at all but she must feel like some sort of mistress"

Hiccup found nothing to snap back.

He frowned. Merida's cheeks were red from yelling at him and her hair looked frizzier than usual due to the humidity of the lake.

"Are you... taking Astrid's side, Merida?"

The girl raised a red brow and nocked another arrow in the bow "I'm a woman just like her, it's not hard for me to sympathize with her. She must think I'm a horrible person for stealing you away from her. In a different world she and i would be great friends. And sparring partners. I've always dreamed a female friend but her they're all frail and fussy ladies"

Hiccup smiled lightly to himself picturing a world where the two fiery young women could spar together as friends, he and Astrid together.

Such a beautiful picture yet so distant and unrealizable.

Toothless walked beside him and Hiccup automatically lifted a hand to stroke his back.

The dragon instantly stiffened and he snatched his hand back "Sorry, bud" he said, feeling the familiar lump in his throat.

Since the fight he had been spending more and more time with Astrid.

He surely understood Hiccup had been neglecting him without it, but that had been the last strain.

Merida watched at him with a puzzled look "So you're just gonna accept it? You won't even try to gain his trust back?"

Hiccup shrugged.

In just one night he had managed to push away two of the ones he loved the most.

"Maybe it's a sign from the gods" he said trying to hide his deep pain "Maybe he'll grow tired with me and come back to Berk with the others after our wedding. He'll surely have someone to take care of him there. I don't know how much time I'll have for him once I'll be... king"

He almost spat out the last word, which still felt foreign and gross on his tongue.

Merida was watching him with an analyzing glare but she said nothing.

She resumed shotting arrows and the argument died there.

Astrid was walking up and down the stables frantically, debating on whether to take Toothless along with her at the sanctuary or not.

The Night Fury was watching her with big eyes, following her every step with a curious gaze.

"What am I gonna do with you?" she asked aloud shaking her head.

He gave her his crooked smile and stretched his tail-fin as if to invite her to ride him once again.

She bit her lip "I don't know, buddy..."

Valka would have asked where the rare dragon came from.

Well, she could always say the truth.

After all it wasn't a big deal as long as she didn't name Berk, it was just that Hiccup was too busy to take him flying.

She shrugged and jumped on the saddle before she could change her mind another time "Okay, let's do it. Come on, Stormfly! Time to pay Valka another visit!"

"So you're telling me everyone in your land has a dragon"

Astrid nodded scratching an hatchling's ears absentmindedly.

Toothless purred like a cat under Valka's slender fingers.

"And your chief's son made everyone change their mind" her dark eyebrows were knitted together.

"Pretty much. It wasn't easy. He was an outcast and his father has well tried to kill Toothless at first but now... if you don't have a dragon you're kinda a minority"

"Sounds like a dream"

Astrid fidgeted "W-what? No, believe me, it's true"

"I tried on my own to make everyone change their mind on my land, starting with my husband" Valka's tone was bitter and distant as if she was caught deep in her memories "Vikings just aren't capable of change"

Astrid was afraid to say the wrong thing so she just looked down, a bit embarrassed.

Toothless crouched back to her and placed his head in her lap.

She smiled caressing him softly.

Valka looked over at them with a small smile "He seems really fond of you"

Astrid shrugged "Yeah, well, after being with someone for five years, his dragon tends to be really close to you as well" she said trying to sound casual.

It took the woman a few seconds to register her words, then her green eyes widened "You two... you and the chief's son were-"

She faked a smile "We were actually supposed to get married in about a week but... your land's safety comes before one's love life so here I am, trying to get away from seeing the man I love with the princess"

Valka was watching her with a sad look "Your chief must not be such a

noble man"

Astrid started to nervously tear some grass from the ground "It's not that. I don't fault him for this, even it brke me. It broke _us_. He just did what was best for his country. He's a great Viking"

There was a moment of silence.

When Valka finally spoke up her voice was deeper than usual, the one of someone who had seen so many things.

"Being a great Viking doesn't always mean you're a great man as well"

Astrid swallowed.

She didn't feel like getting into an argument with her.

And she surely didn't feel like starting to hate Stoick despite what he had done.

"Well..." she sighed "Anyway I came here in the first place because I found something"

"Really?" Valka's eyes brightened with curiosity.

"Yeah, it might be something really big"

The woman leaned on her palms and nodded "I'm listening"

* * *

><p>There you go! Nothing much happens here but I wanted to show Valka meeting Toothless and the bond beetween Hiccup and Merida growing.

Review review and I'll post chapter 11 as soon as I can!

xoxo

11. Mending the bond

Hello everyone! Thank you for your reviews.

The site is working for now so I decided to post the new chapter!

AstridHiccup: Last chapter was a little short just because there weren't many events to write down. This one is longer. I'll try to but I can't promise anything. School is starting in two weeks so I'm kinda busy, sorry. I'll try my best!

As for the others, don't worry, Toothless will be with Astrid very often.

I always forgot to mention this but the characters belong to Dreamworks, Cressida Cowell and Disney.

****I only own the plot.****

****Warning: a lot of Hiccstrid and fluff here because I was starting to miss my babies.****

****Enjoy!****

****Clary Chase****

*** * ***

><p>"This is not good at all" Valka said with a deep frown "If Drago Bludvist is forming a dragon army... Odin help us all"<p>

Astrid couldn't help but be a little surprised by her invoking a Viking god but decided not to say anything.

"You know him?" she asked instead.

The woman nodded, her expression dark "He's a madman" she explained "Many years ago there was a meeting of chiefs to talk about the problem of the dragons. He showed up, wrapped in a weird cloak and said only he knew a way to control the dragons. He would have helped everyone if all of the lands decided to kneel in front of him. They all laughed. He got angry and sent his armed dragons to destroy the hall where all the chiefs were" her eyes shined a little "My husband... he was the only one to survive"

Astrid widened her eyes.

"So your husband was a chief?!" she exclaimed "Who-"

"I can't answer that. Not yet"

The girl made a sound of protest.

"The thing is, we have to protect the dragons. To hide them"

"What?" Astrid jumped up "Valka, no. We can't just hide them all! We should try to knock some sense into him!"

If there was one thing Hiccup had taught her was that people could change for the better, if only you showed them how wrong they were in a kind way.

She was a big example herself.

Valka shook her head "No, Astrid. You can't reason with a man who kills without a reason"

Astrid didn't know what to say.

The woman's words made a lot of sense, after all.

She turned around and looked at Toothless and Stormfly chasing each other in a playful way.

They couldn't hide every dragon from Drago's madness.

But changing his mind would surely save them all.

She bit her lip "Should I... tell the King and my chief about Drago?"

Valka shook her head fiercely "We have to know his plans first" she said "We'll try to track the trappers down again and see what they have to say. Then we'll... see if we have to tell them"

Astrid nodded and decided to drop the argument for the moment.

"Okay, we'll see"

* * *

><p>"I wonder where she always goes" Hiccup muttered watching Astrid landing in courtyard from a balcony.<p>

His father shrugged beside him "You should be happy for her. At least she's not staying her at the castle all moody and sad"

"I don't know..." he sighed "I'd prefer that sometimes. We could... sneak around"

Stoick glared at him "I doubt it would be easy for you two to sneak around after your argument, son"

Hiccup blushed under his piercing gaze "You heard that?"

"We all did. Thanks Odin us Vikings' room are way far from the royals' ones"

He thought about it.

It was a real luck.

Thinking back to it, they could have been discovered more for that than for Astrid's bitter comment at the queen.

"If you really love her... you'll let her go" Stoick said in a dark tone.

Hiccup clenched his jaw "Then I suppose I don't love her enough"

* * *

><p>Hiccup's breath caught as he watched Astrid enter the dining room.<p>

She was wearing a blue dress that matched her eyes and hugged her gentle curves perfectly.

Her hair was down which was weird because she hardly let them down.

The only times he could marvel at her blond curls were when they were alone, usually wrapped into each other's arms under the sheets.

He swallowed at that thought.

Astrid caught him staring and glared briefly in his direction before taking a seat between Ruffnut and Gobber.

Merida squeezed his arm and smiled at him encouragingly.

He smiled back at her weakly and looked down at his plate.

The food looked delicious but he really had no appetite.

The queen suddenly came rushing in, her cheeks red and a big smile plastered on her face.

"I was wondering where you went" King Fergus said with an eyebrow raised.

Elinor waved her hand dismissively "Just... some matters"

Her gaze flicked to Hiccup and Merida for a little moment "I'll tell you about it later"

The dinner was weirdly silent.

Hiccup kept glancing at Astrid now and then through his eyelashes and she would cut him with a dragon-like scowl.

He couldn't help it.

She looked so beautiful in the dim light and the deep neckline of her dress was extremely distracting.

They were about to bring some desserts when the queen finally jumped up.

"I can't keep this anymore" she said happily.

"What is it, dear?" Fergus asked.

Elinor smiled broadly and looked at him and Merida "The clans will be arriving in a few days and your engagement party will take place next week!"

"Next week?!" Merida exclaimed, her eyes wide.

Hiccup felt all of the blood drain from his face "S-so early?" he stuttered.

Elinor watched the two of them as if they had grown two heads "I don't understand the problem. You two look so close! We'll announce it to everyone!"

He suddenly felt embarrassed for saying such a thing.

He faked a smile "Yeah, you're right, my queen. It's a great idea"

The queen smiled at him.

Merida didn't even fake shame for her exclamation.

Her fingers were clenching the edge of the table tightly, making her

knuckles turn white.

There was a clinking and Hiccup turned his head to see Astrid raising her glass.

Her smile could look sincere to someone who didn't know her but he knew better.

Her lips were pressed in a thin line and her eyes didn't shine as they usually did.

"I propose a toast" she said a clear voice "To the betrothed"

Everyone seemed hesitant at first, but then they all raised their glasses and toasted to the still pale and shocked couple.

Hiccup looked at Astrid.

She was looking away but he could see her eyes were clouded.

"Well" the queen said cheerfully clapping her hands together "Tomorrow we'll start to sew your party dresses!"

* * *

><p>He heard her before seeing her.<p>

He had seen her dark silhouette running through the courtyard towards the nearby little wood, her loyal axe on her shoulder and the cloak swinging in the night breeze.

It was dark and chilly and the sound of the axe cutting through the air and her frustrated groans didn't make the situation any better.

Hiccup hid behind a rock.

The moonlight filtrated through the trees illuminating Astrid's figure.

She looked pale, her braid messy swung over her shoulder.

She was wearing the dress from dinner, which flew in every direction as she moved to pick up her weapon once again.

She cried out and he finally decided to show himself "Are you imagining that poor tree is me?" he asked aloud.

Astrid whipped her head around and held up her axe instinctively.

"What are you doing here?" she snapped.

He stepped forward "You didn't answer my question"

"Neither did you"

"Ladies first"

"I'm not a lady" she muttered darkly.

He stopped a few feet away from her "I saw you heading here and I followed you" he admitted.

She squinted her eyes, not looking exactly satisfied.

"_Yes_" she said in a sharp tone "I often imagine these trees are you"

He bit his lip "Poor trees"

"You shouldn't be here. You should be with your fiance, _you two look so close,_ after all" she quoted in a mocking voice.

"That doesn't m-"

"Have you two slept together already?"

His mouth dropped open "Wha-"

"Oh, of course not!" she smacked a hand on her forehead "She's a princess! Not a stupid Viking. She must be treated with any-"

He took a step towards her and she held her axe in his direction "Don't come near me!" she shrieked.

"Astrid, come on" he pleaded.

"NO!" she exclaimed "Go away!"

He tried again and when she pointed her axe to his chin he pulled out his sword.

Astrid backed away "Leave me alone, Hiccup, before you get hurt!"

They started to spar.

"You really think I will?" he asked ducking to avoid her hit.

It was all so surreal.

The were fighting again, with weapons even.

"I don't know!" she sounded exasperated "Just let me be!"

"Yeah, sure!"

Without realising it they had neared a tree.

Hiccup pinned Astrid against the trunk and she yelped when he put his sword at her throat.

"Don't you dare to touch me" she hissed.

"What if I do?" he said boldly.

"I'll cut your throat"

He tilted his head and as soon as his sword left her skin exposed he kissed her neck.

A strangled sound left her lips and she went limp against him.

"Hiccup!" she hissed, though her voice was little and weak.

She tried to shove him away but his arms were a steady cage around her tiny body.

Hiccup ignored her nails digging painfully in his vest and caressed her jawline with his lips.

Her skin was soft as he remembered, flawless and smooth.

After a few more attempts Astrid let go, and her arms loosened around his neck.

Hiccup held her more tightly to his chest.

"It didn't have to be like this..." she murmured tilting her head to expose more skin to his touch.

He pulled away and looked at her.

Her eyes were big in the dark.

He couldn't see the color of her skin but he could feel the heat radiating off her body from where he placed his hand on her cheek.

"I know" he murmured pressing his forehead against hers "But we can't do anything about it"

Astrid watched him with a sad expression "I'm sorry for what happened"

"No, I am sorry" Hiccup said shaking his head "I should have never yelled at you or treated you like that"

"What I said..." her voice was unsteady "I didn't mean it. I love you with all my heart, Hiccup. I really do. I was just upset and..."

She opened her mouth but no sound came out of it.

He pressed a quick kiss to her lips "I love you too" he whispered "And for the record, I haven't even kissed Merida"

Astrid relaxed in his arms "You haven't?" she asked incredulously.

"No, I haven't. Why should I?"

She shrugged biting her lip "I don't know... she's your fiance..."

He kissed her cheek "That doesn't change anything"

Astrid grazed his cheekbones with her fingertips gently.

Then she pulled him down and kissed him.

The kiss was slow at first, almost hesitant.

Hiccup was uncertain on putting more passion in it, afraid he would scare her and she would once again shrink back from his touch.

But when her hands disappeared in his hair and tugged gently all his reserves were thrown out the window.

He hoisted her up easily and his fingers slipped under her dress.

He caressed her hips in a slow motion, feeling the softness of her skin, her little battle scars he knew by heart.

She gasped and leaned her forehead on his shoulder when he brushed his knuckles on her thighs.

"Hiccup..." she murmured.

Her breath was hot against his neck and he could smell something sweet in it, maybe honey.

Her fingers slid past the hem of his shirt and touched his shoulder blades.

He shivered at their coldness.

Pressing her against the tree so she wouldn't fall, he took her hands in his.

He kissed her fingers and heat spread through them right away.

He glanced up at her and saw tears streaming down her face.

"Hey" he murmured taking her face in his hands "Don't cry"

He kissed the tears away and nuzzled his nose in her neck.

"Sorry" she said "It's just... I've missed you"

He smiled lightly "I've missed you too" he brushed blonde bangs out of her eyes "How about we go to my room?"

The proposal seemed to appeal her.

A small smile appeared on her face as she nodded "I think it's a great idea"

* * *

><p>Silence had never been a problem with Hiccup.<p>

And _this_ kind of silence surely didn't bother Astrid at all.

The only sounds were their breaths still slowing down to reach a normal pace.

The pale moonlight illuminated the small room and gave it an even

more intimate atmosphere.

She had her face on the pillow and her hands clenched into Hiccup's larger ones.

His lips traveling across the skin of her back relaxed her.

She exhaled when he kissed the back of her neck and his arms snaked around her waist, his hands grazing her belly.

"This was amazing" he said.

She turned her head to look at him "It was. Even more so because we haven't touched each other in days"

He hid his face in her hair.

Her skin tingled where it collided with his.

Even after times and times it still felt new and magical.

Hiccup's touches always made her feel like a teenager again, when butterflies flew in her stomach every time he took her hand.

Making love to him that night had made her feel like she hadn't since her feet had first touched Dunbroch's ground.

His kisses, his gentle touches and sweet words whispered against her bare skin had assuaged her that he still truly loved her.

She felt like a huge burden had been lifted off her shoulders.

She rolled around and pulled Hiccup against her.

He rested his head on her chest, his lips barely touching the soft skin of her breasts.

"I never want this to end" he said.

She kissed his forehead "Just savor the moment. Don't think about when it'll end"

He nodded and let her play with his hair.

No more words were needed between them.

As they held each other under the covers, she realised their stupid mistake.

They only had a few more weeks to spend together and they had to make every stolen moment precious. They could not afford another fight.

"Astrid?"

"Mh?"

"Do you still love me?"

"Of course I do, silly. Now, sleep"

She felt his eyes flutter closed "Good. Because I love you too. And I'll never stop loving you, no matter what"

Her lips curled upward and she tightened her hold on his shoulders.

She rested her cheek on his head and closed her own eyes.

It wasn't late before she fell asleep, tangled in her lover's embrace.

* * *

><p>What do you think? Liked it?

I'm sorry if some of you didn't like the scene between Hiccup and Astrid but I didn't do anything detailed, a**nyway the rating is T so...**

REVIEW pleaseee! Reading your opinions always make me happy!

I'll try to post chapter 12 as soon as I can :)

12. Pain

Hello guys!

I have to say I expected more reviews on the last chapter, especially because many of you were asking for Hiccup and Astrid to make peace.

Anyway, here you have chapter 12.

I have an exam this week so I don't know when I'll be able to write and post chapter 13 but I promise I'll try my best!

Enjoy

~Clary Chase

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up to a kiss pressed to his temple.<p>

He opened his eyes to find Astrid staring down at him with a small smile.

She was sitting with her back leaned on the wall, the sheets covering her chest.

"What is it?" he asked.

She gestured for the window "It's almost dawn. I thought I'd wake you up to make you know I'm going back to my room"

"Oh" he only said.

That night had been so wonderful he had almost thought it would never end.

Astrid bent over and kissed him on the lips "We'll have other moments like this" she assured him.

"I sure hope so" he said running his fingers up and down her spine.

She kissed his neck briefly and jumped off the bed.

She collected her clothes and dressed herself.

"Thank you" she said.

"For what?"

"For tonight"

He smiled at her "No, thank you. I love you"

"I love you too" she said.

As soon as the door was closed behind her Hiccup fell on pillows, thinking of the day that awaited him.

* * *

><p>"So you two made peace" the princess concluded.<p>

"Yeah" Hiccup said, a faint blush coloring his cheeks.

Merida looked at him and understood "Oh... so you two made a _GREAT_ peace!"

Hiccup flushed red "_Would you lower your voice?!_" he hissed looking around in the corridor in a frantic way "Someone could hear you"

The princess bit her lip to not burst into laughter "Sorry but your face was priceless" she put a hand on his arm and smiled up at him sincerely "But really, I'm happy you two made peace. You actually looked really miserable"

When they finally reached the room the queen had told them the door swung open revealing some young servants.

They had to be probably two years younger than Hiccup.

They looked at him with eyes narrowed and red cheeks, their lower lips caught between their teeth to contain the visible giggles.

He felt a little embarrassed to be watched with so much interest by women who weren't Astrid.

The room was kind of big, full of leather, silks, dresses and other instruments used for sewing.

"Oh, you guys are here!" Elinor chirped getting up from her chair "Well then we can start!"

"What? T-together?" Merida stuttered.

The queen looked at her daughter with her eyebrows raised "Well, I thought it would be a good idea for you two to see the other with all clothes on. You know, so it will be less uncomfortable for when you'll be married"

Hiccup felt all of the blood drain from his face.

By the queen's point of view it was an actually kind gesture.

But from his point of view, and probably Merida's too, it was just nother torture.

He swallowed.

The weavers looked at their ruler with expectation and when she received no answer from the young couple she shrugged gesturing for them.

"Do what you have to do"

* * *

><p>Astrid let out a frustrated groan when she couldn't pick her axe from the aim.<p>

"Want a little help?"

Her head whipped around and she found Stoick looking down at her.

She nodded and stepped aside, watching as he easily took it away and handed it to her.

"I didn't hear you coming" she said whipping her hands on her gown.

The chief shrugged and sat on one of the trunks that were placed all around the training area "Yeah, well I'm kinda light" he said with a little smirk.

The girl snickered and swung her axe in the air.

"Why are you here?"

"Do I need a reason to see you?"

She raised an eyebrow but didn't object.

There was a brief moment of silence, then Stoick said "Hiccup's worried about you"

Astrid rolled her eyes "So there is a reason" she said.

He ignored her "You can't fault him. You disappear almost every day with the dragons and stay out until late. He has every right to be worried"

"No he does not" she deadpanned throwing her axe "I just take the dragons flying or else they never would. It's not like I'm seeing a man in secret. And even if it was so it would be none of his business"

"You two made peace last night" the man observed without looking at her.

Astrid's breath caught. Her cheeks were burning.

"H-how d-?"

"Come on" Stoick grinned a little in her direction "You made noise when you ran in the corridors. And when you were inside his room as well. It was clear enough"

She bit her lip.

She had never been that embarrassed those few times Stoick had discovered they had slept together.

She probably was now because it was forbidden.

She swallowed "I'm sorry" she said in a small voice.

Stoick frowned "You think I'm mad at you?" he asked.

"Aren't you?" she said sharply.

"No. That's what people who love each other do. And you love each other"

She wanted to retort something but just then a guard came running in yelling "Chief Stoick! You need to come!"

Stoick stood up quickly "What is it?" he asked.

The guard's breath was heavy "It's your son. He's in pain and nobody knows how to handle him"

Astrid's knees buckled. She glanced at Stoick who was watching her with a meaningful look.

When she spoke up her voice was unsteady "Lead us to him"

Astrid almost tripped in the dressing room.

"Stoick! You're here!" the queen exclaimed.

Merida, who was standing beside her, was pale, her eyes big and wide.

There was a strangled sound in the corner and Astrid saw Hiccup in a wooden chair, sweaty and goshly pale.

Her heart sank at the sight of him.

She didn't want to know what had happened, she just knew he was experiencing his horrible phantom pains.

"Please do something" Elinor told Stoick.

Astrid could feel his gaze on her "Astrid will. She's the only one who can do this"

The girl rushed to Hiccup's side.

"Hiccup" she called soothingly stroking his thighs "Hey, look at me"

He did and she almost gasped.

It had been so long since the last time he had been caught by that pain.

His green eyes were clouded, almost empty.

His body was shaking hard, radiating a feverish heat.

"Astrid..." he said weakly "It hurts..."

Her chest felt heavy.

In a normal situation she would have told him how much she loved him and held him tightly, stroking his leg under the warm furs of his bed.

She carefully undid the strings of his prosthetic with practiced fingers.

She had done it so many times, especially the first two years when he showed up at her window in the middle of the night, the pain forbidding him to sleep.

She took his shortened leg in her hands and began to rub it gently.

Hiccup stiffened a bit, his breath catching.

"Hiccup" she called him again and he looked at her, his head leaned on the wall.

"Remember what you lost your leg for?"

"My stump" he hissed.

Astrid frowned "No, Hiccup. Your leg" she corrected him "You lost it because you were saving us all from the Red Death, remember? It was a heroic situation"

He squeezed his eyes "It hurts" he repeated.

She almost felt hopeless.

"Think of something good" she finally said "For example uh... the first time Toothless let you touch him? Or uhm, let's see... remember the first time you won the dragon race?" he started to relax under her touch.

A small smile pulled at his lips "We partied hard that night" he

grinned a little.

Astrid couldn't help but chuckle "Yeah. And Ruff and I had to run behind you and the guys because you were all so drunk"

He snickered but then he was shaken by another wave of pain.

"Okay what do you think of when you and Snot accidentally set Gobber's pants on fire? Or when Ruff and Tuff decided they wanted to adopt a yak? Or-"

"Our first flight" he blurted out, his eyes closed.

Astrid's breath hitched and she widened her eyes.

She opened her mouth but no words came out of it.

He was in pain and hot, he wasn't thinking clearly, because otherwise he would have never brought up their first romantic flight.

Anyway the thought of that night seemed to make him feel better than anything else and she was kind of glad for it.

She just stood there, slightly embarrassed, gently rubbing his leg and watching his face relax.

His breath slowed down and Astrid took a cloth to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

By now, Hiccup was sleeping.

Phantom pains always deprived him of all his strength.

She stood up on her shaking legs and looked at Stoick "Can you bring him to his room? He needs to rest"

The Chief nodded and stepped forward, squeezing her shoulder "Thank you" he said.

She nodded and watched him as he easily picked up Hiccup in his arms like he was still a kid.

"My ladies" he said bowing a little "Please excuse us"

"We'll send some healers" the queen said as the man exited the room.

Astrid closed her eyes for a moment, then fixed her gaze on the servants.

"What happened?" she asked to no one in particular.

To her surprise, it was one of the youngest weavers who spoke up "We were taking some measures"

The young Vikings raised an eyebrow and the girl gulped under her piercing glance.

"That's not all" she only said.

"We asked him to roll up his pants so we could see the real lenght of his leg" another one explained.

"You did _what_?!" she yelled.

The other girls gasped but the one who had spoken held her look "We didn't think something like that would happen!" she defended raising her voice "We've done this so many times with the King! He never-"

"The King is a grown man!" Astrid shouted, forgetting any good manner "Hiccup lost his leg when he was fifteen! Just five years ago! He was barely a boy! Do you have any idea of what that means?!"

Everyone in the room gasped but she couldn't know if it was because of her unlady-like outburst or for knowing Hiccup was so young when his left foot was taken away forever.

She honestly couldn't care less.

She took a deep breath and tried to recompose herself, pushing her bangs aside.

"I'm a little tired" she said "If you'll excuse me your majesties, I'd go rest a bit"

"Astrid" Merida called softly and she turned.

The princess had a sincerly grateful look "Thank you"

Astrid bit her lip and bowed "It was a pleasure"

She was half-way in the corridor when she heard a voice call her name.

The queen approached her with her usual regal walk.

"My queen" she said.

Elinor watched her skeptically "It looked like you helped Hiccup a lot with his phantom pains" she observed.

The girl blushed "Yes, indeed"

"Why did you?"

Astrid clenched her fists. She didn't like to be interrogated but not answering could cost her a lot.

"I've always been the one who could calm him down" she simply answered.

"Why?"

She swallowed the bile that had gathered in her throat "Hiccup and I have been friends since we were little kids. Our families were long time friends"

The queen pursed her lips and squinted her eyes "So you two are kind

of best friends"

"Yes, your highness"

"Just that"

Astrid almost stumbled, but she held the woman's gaze "Yes, just that"

There was a moment of silence.

Then the queen said "I know you're lying, Astrid Hofferson"

Astrid flinched at her cold tone and upon hearing her full name in such a threatening way.

"I've seen the way you look at him and, unfortunately, the way he looks at you as well. I don't know what was between the two of you, if it was just a crush or a love story, if it was over or not, but I honestly don't want to know. You are no longer part of his life and I ask you to not interfere with his path anymore, he's betrothed to Merida now"

Astrid hadn't even realised it.

She was so used to pain and wounds she hadn't seen or felt the queen's fingers digging in the fabric of her dress as she held her arm in an iron grip.

Elinor looked down and her eyes widened.

Astrid snatched her arm back.

She glared at the woman and massaged her skin "You have no power on me" she hissed "You're not my queen. And I'll do what I want"

Before the other could say anything she was running away, holding her gown high.

When she reached the courtyard the cold air almost slapped her across the face.

She fell on her knees and tears streamed down her face to then fall in the grass.

She was shaken by silent sobs, her head throbbing for the queen's sharp words, her body yearning for Hiccup's familiar embrace in her weakest moments.

She heard silent steps approaching and then saw a figure kneeling in front of her.

She looked up and saw Merida.

"Why are you here?" she snapped, even though her voice was hoarse.

"I came to check on you" the princess deadpanned.

"Why?" Astrid glared at her "To make sure I didn't go to

Hiccup?"

The girl frowned "I'm not my mother, Astrid" she said in a surprisingly strong voice.

"Oh really?"

The other scoffed "Please. Don't you see how different we are? It's all just an act. I thought you were more clever than that"

Astrid narrowed her eyes in confusion and Merida rolled her eyes.

She leaned on her palm and sat comfortably in the grass.

Her hands reached for her bun and undid the complicated knots.

Her frizzy hair came loose in a red waterfall on her shoulders.

Merida shook them in a way no princess would and sighed "I hate buns. They always make my head ache"

"You should try a braid, then" Astrid blurted out.

The princess looked at her "Mh, maybe I'll try it. Thanks"

Astrid wiped her face hastily and started to tear grass from the ground.

"I'm sorry for what my mother said" Merida finally said.

She looked at her "W-why would you be sorry?"

She was pinned by her serious blue gaze "Astrid, I know everything" Astrid almost choked but the other didn't let her say anything "I heard part of your and Hiccup's conversation the night Toothless and Stormfly arrived. Hiccup told me everything and I'll tell you this: I have nothing to do with this arranged marriage"

Astrid was more and more confused "W-what?"

Merida shrugged "I don't want to marry Hiccup. Or actually, I don't want to marry someone I don't love. And honestly, if I knew about your wedding I would have done something"

"You couldn't do anything" Astrid said bitterly "You're not queen yet. Only parents can decide"

She looked at her "I'm sorry, really"

Astrid didn't know what was happening, maybe she was becoming weaker.

First Valka, now Merida.

She couldn't help but believe to the princess' words.

"You have nothing to be sorry about" she said "It's not your fault"

She smiled a little and Merida's features softened "I want us to be friends. I don't want you to see me as an enemy. We can be fighting partners"

She bit her lip "I don't know, your highness..."

"Merida" the other ordered "Call me Merida, I already told you. I honestly don't even feel like royalty"

That made Astrid truly laugh "Really?" she said "You look so composed, gentle and delicate"

Merida narrowed her eyes and stood up.

As a clear answer she wiped her dirty hands on her dress.

"You think I'm a lady, then?" she dared with a playful smirk.

"Yes, I do. _Your highness_" Astrid teased her standing up as well.

"I'll prove you wrong"

"Is that a challenge?"

"You can say it"

"Okay, then. Bring it on"

* * *

><p>Did you like it?

I honestly enjoyed writing Astrid and Merida because I've always dreamed to see these two girls together.

They usually make them enemies but being both such strong warriors I think they would be great friends.

**What do you say? Can we reach 150 reviews til next update?
;)**

Love you guys!

13. Away for a while

Hey guys!

I'm not dead! Sorry for the loooong wait, I've just been busy with school and other stuff and I haven't had a lot of time to write.

Thank you SO SO MUCH for all of your reviews, they made me really happy.

Anyway here you go with chapter 13, I hope you like it!

****Love,****

****Clary Chase****

****P.S. A special thank you to my sweetie Lorde for all of your support through my tumblr blog! I love you, girl! 3****

*** * ***

><p>Astrid's breath was already slowing down when Merida reached her.<p>

"Not fair" the princess panted leaning against a tree "Your dress is more comfortable than mine"

The girl raised an eyebrow "Actually it's the opposite. I never wear dresses whereas I'm sure you run a lot in them. You just don't want to admit you lost"

Merida chuckled lightly and closed her eyes "Okay, you're right. You win"

Astrid smiled and slid down on the grass "And you're definitely not a princess on the inside, I'll give you that"

"That's better" the other said plopping down as well.

They were silent for what felt like forever.

Their breaths were still reaching a normal space and the only sounds around them were birds chirping and and a river not so far.

"Will he be okay?"

Astrid snapped her head in Merida's direction.

"Mh?"

"Hiccup. Is he gonna be okay?"

The young Viking shrugged "Yes, eventually. It takes some time for him to recover. It's been so long since he last experienced that pain so I can't be sure about the way it will affect him this time"

The princess only nodded and stared into space.

"I should have probably thought about it" she said with uncertainty.

"No, there was nothing you could do"

"Yes there was. But as always I'm too selfish to put someone's well-being before mine" she let out a little sigh "I was more worried about him seeing me half-naked than him being embarassed or uncomfortable for _that_"

Astrid bit her lip.

Half-naked.

She felt her cheeks flush and her head spin slightly for jealousy.

There was nothing wrong with it.

They would get married sooner or later.

And sooner or later the two of them would end up in bed.

Still, thinking that Hiccup had seen parts of Merida's skin that he had only seen from her made her vision become all fuzzy.

"He'll be fine" she finally deadpanned "He's much stronger than people give him credit for"

She could see Merida looking at her from the corner of her eye.

"You know my mother will do anything in her power not to leave you two alone in the same room anymore, do you?"

"Yes, I know"

Her voice sounded weaker and smaller than she had hoped.

The thought of not being able to enjoy a moment beautiful as the night before felt even more suffocating than dragon's smoke.

Not being able to feel his lips against hers. His hands travelling slowly on her back. His arms making a big cage around her.

She wasn't ready to lose that yet.

But then again, she never would be.

"As for me, I'll do anything in my power to give you some privacy without her knowing"

The sentence snapped her out of her reverie.

Astrid widened her eyes at Merida.

"What?"

The red raised an eyebrow "You heard me" she said "I'll try to find some times to leave you two to do... whatever you have to do_"

She blushed at the last one and Astrid grinned a bit.

"Would you?"

"Sure"

Astrid was about to reply something when the sound of horns made her jump up, startled.

Merida laughed "Don't worry. That's just my parents' way to tell me to come back home"

The Viking furrowed her brows "Oh, yeah sure. It's just... the sound of horns still reminds me of when I was awoken in the dead of night"

for dragon raids"

The princess nodded slightly and stood up "Well then, we better get back"

The walk back was oddly silent and when the castle came into view Astrid's heart sank a little.

It was starting to get dark and she could see Hiccup's room had candles lit up.

Maybe he was already awake.

Merida followed her gaze "Do you want to go to him?" she asked softly "I could cover for you"

Astrid shook her head "No, I think right now I just need some time alone. I'll go flying a little"

"But it's almost dinner time! And it's getting dark"

She smirked looking over at the other girl "Honestly it's not like I'm afraid of the dark"

Merida squinted her eyes at her "If you won't be back for midnight we'll send guards to look for you"

A humorless laugh escaped past Astrid's lips "Seriously? Come on, Merida. I'd just do your mother a favor if I disappeared tonight!"

The princess' gaze was stony and expressionless and she shrugged "Whatever! I'm a big viking girl! Tell Stoick and Hiccup not to go out of their minds with worry"

Before the other could even reply she was sprinting towards the stables.

* * *

><p>The nest wasn't as dark as the outside world, blue light illuminating the meadows and the dragons sleeping peacefully on the grass.<p>

It wasn't hard to spot Valka, crouched like a cat on Cloujumper's back.

Toothless and Stormfly were instantly assaulted by baby terrors and Astrid walked slowly towards the four-winged dragon.

Valka's silhouette was kind of creepy against the icy light, her weird mask pushed up on her head.

"It's late"

Astrid yelped and stumbled "H-how did you know I was here?" she asked, surprised.

The woman turned her face and smiled at her "I heard you. Your footsteps aren't exactly light"

She rolled her eyes "Right" she muttered "Stupid sharp senses"

The feral lady chuckled and slid down on the grass beside her dragon before patting the ground "Come sit"

Astrid obliged and plopped down next to her.

Just as she did so, all of her strenght started to slip from her body and she realised how tired she actually was.

"Rough day?" Valka asked, touching the grass with her staff "You never came so late in here"

"Actually, yes"

The girl laid down and closed her eyes "I had to escape for a while"

Valka sighed, her look faraway.

"I guess your boyfriend is involved"

"He's not my boyfriend. But yes. He is"

"If ye want to talk about it you can. But by now it would be really helpful to know the kid's name"

"_Hiccup_" Astrid blurted out.

It was all so quick she almost thought she had imagined it.

But no, she hadn't.

She didn't miss the way Valka's shoulders tensed, or her hands clenching the staff more tightly before letting it go completely.

It was as if the name had brought back old memories.

"Yeah?"

It took Astrid a moment to realise Valka wanted her to speak about her day.

"Oh, uhm yeah" she breathed and sat up, smoothing her skirt "Well, he has a fake leg, you know? He lost it five years ago while protecting us all from a dragon. In the first periods he often experienced phantom pains but then somehow they simply stopped. Today the weavers asked him to undress and he freaked out at the mere thought of someone who wasn't me seeing his leg without the prosthetic. Also the queen basically hates me because she sees there's something between the two of us"

There was silence, and maybe that was exactly what Astrid needed: just telling everything to someone who had nothing to do with what happened in the castle without being judged.

The silence was broken when her stomach suddenly growled loudly.

Valka's head snapped in her direction and she blushed "Uh, sorry"

The woman gave her a warm smile, so maternal that she almost melted under her gaze.

Gods she missed her own mother so much.

"When have you last eaten?" she asked.

Astrid shrugged "This morning I guess"

Valka rolled her eyes and stood up, beaming at her.

"Come on, I still have some meatballs inside"

* * *

><p>The large clock on the watchtower said it was almost midnight when she silently ran up the stairs.<p>

She opened the door to her bedroom and instantly she was pulled aside, a hand on her mouth.

Reacting like a wild animal she bit the unknown hand and elbowed the stranger in the ribs.

"**OW**" a familiar voice croaked "Why _would you do that_?!"

"Hiccup!" she exclaimed in shock.

She reached out for the door handle and shut it closed.

"What are you doing here?" she hissed.

Hiccup glared at her from the bed "Just wanted to see if you were okay" he grunted.

She scoffed "As if I'm the one was ill today"

He pursed his lips "Yeah... about that, thank you. I really feel better now"

She shrugged and nonchalantly kicked off her boots "Anytime" she said walking out of her skirt.

She looked over at Hiccup to see his cheeks were bright red "My Dad told me I said aloud that one of my happiest memories was our first flight"

Astrid nodded.

"I hope that didn't make the queen treat you too badly"

She bit her lip and threw her shoulder-pads and shirt on the ground.

"I don't think she noticed" she lied, a knot forming in her belly "And even if she did, she hasn't said anything about it"

Hiccup seemed to relax at that.

He looked at her up and down, his gaze lingering a bit on her breast-plates.

It was stupid, but she felt the urge to cover herself.

He raised an eyebrow.

Stretching his arms out, he pulled her in his lap and leaned his head in the crook of her neck.

He inhaled and she felt him frown against her bare skin "You smell of grass" he observed.

She swallowed "I uh... I've been playing in the woods with the dragons"

So many lies.

She hated lying to him.

She hated all of this.

Hiccup's arms tightened around her body and she pushed his hair out of his eyes.

Their foreheads touched and their noses bumped together.

"Stay with me tonight?" Astrid asked timidly.

His smile was sweet as his lips brushed against hers "Of course, milady"

* * *

><p>And here it is!

Again, I'm really really sorry if I kept you all waiting so long but some not so happy things happened in my life so that's why I haven't been around.

Hopefully it won't happen again!

Thank you to all the ones who kept on reviewing and sending me messages, that means a LOT!

LOVE YOU GUYS xoxo

Til next update!

14. Senseless shame

Oh gods guys I'm _so so_ sorry!

I've been such a bad writer in these past months but I haven't had a lot of time to write because of school!

****Hope you all can forgive me!****

****Anyway I'm so grateful most of you kept on reviewing and sending me messages asking to update, it made me really really happy!****

****Here you go with chapter 14, I hope it is somehow worth the long wait!****

****As always, let me know what you think of it in a review
;))****

****xoxo****

**** - Clary Chase ****

*** * ***

><p>"It would be better if you didn't do this"<p>

"I have to" Astrid insisted making herself more comfortable on the saddle.

Valka's expression was hard, her jaw clenched and her thick eyebrows furrowed together.

"You don't have to" she snapped "But of course I can't stop you"

She jumped on Cloudjumper with an ease that still left her speechless and stuck her long staff in the weird saddle.

Then she turned to look at her.

"It's going to be dangerous"****

"I know"****

"If something happens, I want you to escape"****

"You can't make me, you know that, right?"****

Big green eyes stared down at her, serious but still full of fondness and love.****

"I could never keep on living if something happened to you and I knew it's because of me"****

"Nothing will happen to me"****

"You can't know that"****

"Come on, Hiccup! It's not the first time we do something reckless"****

"This is different"****

"How so?"****

"Look-"****

"-strid? Astrid!"

Astrid blinked stupidly and stared in front of her.

Valka had her eyebrows furrowed "Maybe you're not in the mental condition to come"

"I'm not arguing anymore" she snapped turning her head "I'm coming along. End of the story"

And so it was. They flew in silence for what felt like hours, the dragons' wings moving the wind as the only background sound.

When they finally reached the place where Astrid had first encountered the dragon-trappers, it was dark.

"Why isn't anyone on the deck?" Astrid whispered.

"They probably didn't expect you to come back" Valka murmured back "Drago's men aren't exactly known for their intelligence"

It didn't take long for them to find the part of the boat where they held the dragons.

Valka hissed as if she was in physical pain looking at the tiny cells where the creatures were moving frantically.

With Cloudjumper's claws help they easily opened the cages without making any noise.

The dragons instantly flew away, maybe towards the Bewilderbeast's nest.

Valka looked happier than ever.

"I'm gonna check that side of the boat okay?" Astrid told her.

Before the woman could reply, she was crouching away.

The dark had never been a problem for her and she moved with easy between the wooden boxes.

She had just turned a corner and saw a big cage with a Hubblegrunt in it when two big arms grabbed her in a not so gentle way and pulled her to someone's chest.

She was about to scream but she felt a hand on her mouth.

"I wouldn't scream if I were you" a familiar voice whispered dangerously close to the nape of her neck.

She bit down on the scarred skin and Eret pulled his hand away but held her more tightly.

"What do you want from me?" she hissed.

She heard him snort.

"You're a fierce girl, I see. I like fierce girls you know?"

"Too bad I'm already taken"

"No you're not" he said "No taken girl would fly like this at this hour"

She felt lips against her throat and shivered.

She tried to move but he didn't let her.

From the corner of her eye she saw Valka in a corner inspecting the cage.

She could never free the dragon seeing Eret's position.

Astrid bit down her disgust for what she was about to do and turned her head.

Eret's dark eyes were watching hers, their noses touching and their lips inches apart.

She could feel his hot breath on her face.

"You know what?" she said batting her eyelashes seductively "You're right. I have no one. And by the way, my name's Astrid"

Then she shoved him against a wall and kissed him.

Her lips tingled, feeling the difference from the only other lips they had ever kissed.

Eret made throaty sound that almost made her puke in his mouth but she held her cover.

He tangled his fingers in her hair and undid her braid, deepening the kiss.

Peeking one eye open, she saw Valka and Cloudjumper.

Eret moved his chapped lips to her neck and she fakes a moan to cover the sound of the cage opening and the Hubblegrunt flying away.

Astrid saw her opportunity.

She brought Eret down and kicked him in his neather regions.

"What the-" he croaked falling to his feet.

She lowered to his gaze and smirked "Just to make you feel a little better" she said "You're a very good kisser"

He barely had the time to look up at her that Toothless was smaking his tailfin on his head.

Eret collapsed to the floor with a loud tank.

"We better go before the others wake up" Valka was suddenly at her side.

"Are the dragons all free?" she asked.

The woman nodded.

"Okay then"

They took off just seconds before the other sailors came rushing on the deck screaming Eret's name.

* * *

><p>Astrid instantly knew something was up when she arrived at the castle.<p>

There were carriages in the courtyard and all the candles in the hallways had been lit up.

A delicious scent filled the air and loud voices came from the dining room that radiated happiness and heat.

Strangely no guard was around so she peeked one eye inside.

She swiftly pulled back and slapped a hand on her forehead.

She had been so caught up in the preparations for the rescue that she had completely forgotten the lords were supposed to arrive today.

For a moment she pondered on going in despite her being late, but a quick look at her reflex in a window made her change her mind very quickly.

Her clothes were dirty and her skirt was ripped. Her hair was down and she still could feel the ghost of Eret's lips on her neck.

Chasing back the tears of bitterness that were trying so desperately to fall, she picked up her axe and ran to her room.

As soon as the door was closed behind her she shrugged out of her clothes and threw them in a corner like they were garbage.

The cold air slapped her body and she shivered.

She lit up the candles and made her way to the toilet.

The bathtub looked so appealing and after filling it with hot water she slipped inside.

Astrid let her head rest against the wall and closed her eyes.

She kept repeating herself she had kissed and gave in to Eret just to help Valka save that dragon, but a tiny evil part of her brain was screaming she had done it to have some sort of sick revenge on Hiccup who, right now, was with another woman.

But she would have never done that.

Or would she?

Was she going completely insane?

She let her tears fall and salt the water she was flowing into, trying to get rid of all the anger, embarrassment and sadness.

When she was tired out from her crying she dried herself and slipped in her nightgown.

It was really late when the door opened and she heard those familiar steps, the prosthetic clicking loudly on the ground.

The mattress lowered as Hiccup sat next to her and took her cold hand in his.

She couldn't help it. She pretended to sleep.

Hiccup sighed, probably disappointed by finding her already asleep.

Astrid felt all the shame for wanting a revenge on him for something that wasn't under his control weigh on her chest.

She felt his fingertips trace the lines of her face in such a gentle way that she almost betrayed herself and flew in his arms.

He ducked and kissed her forehead, then her eyelids, then her cheek and finally her mouth.

He squeezed her hand once more and left the room with a barely whispered "Goodnight, my love"

When she was sure he was far away she hid her face in the pillow and started crying again.

* * *

><p>The next morning she woke up very early.<p>

When she arrived in the dining room only the royal family and Stoick were there.

"Astrid!" Merida exclaimed, her face lighting up.

Elinor scowled at her daughter. After two weeks she had still not understood what had drawn the two girls so close.

And whatever reason it was, she didn't seem to appreciate it.

"Are you okay, Astrid?" Stoick asked worriedly.

She was about to reply when the Queen spoke up "Have a sit" she said in her cold tone.

Astrid did so and sat down next to Merida who gave her a warm look.

"Would you mind telling us why you weren't here yesterday when the clans arrived?" Elinor asked.

She couldn't afford more hostility with the Queen so she played the regret card.

"I'm so sorry, your Highness. I just wasn't feeling really well and had to take some fresh air. When I remembered the clans were supposed to arrive it was too late so I decided not to show up at dinner late and embarrass you all"

She almost smiled in victory watching Elinor's expression turning from one of scolding to one of delightful surprise.

It was clear she didn't expect her to be so polite to her after everything that had happened between the two of them.

"Oh... uhm... okay" she said, stunned "I just hope it won't be too weird to introduce you to the lords"

It wasn't weird.

It probably would have been if the lords and their respective sons and wives weren't so strange, but they were all kinda crazy so it was no big deal.

Astrid felt Hiccup's eyes on her the whole breakfast time, but didn't look at him one time, too ashamed for pretending to be asleep the night before just to not talk to him.

When the meal was over everyone went to their rooms for the morning routine and Astrid found herself cornered against her door.

"I came to your room last night" Hiccup told her, his lips brushing against his.

Now that her senseless shame had somehow gone away she felt the need to have him close to her once again.

"Really?" she said pecking his lips "I was asleep. Maybe I can make it up to you now. Why don't you come inside for a while?"

She smirked at him and he blushed "I'd like to but..."

She pouted "But what?"

He looked over his shoulder "You know what? I don't have the meeting with the lords for another two hours. I guess you can make it up to me"

He pushed her inside the room and kissed her with passion.

Astrid melted in his arms, her heart racing as she recognised his soft lips and the tender press of his fingers on her hips.

"What were you doing yesterday anyway?" he asked undoing her braid.

"Mhmh not gonna tell you" she grinned removing his shirt.

"But-"

"Shh... less talking, more letting me make it up to you"

"As you wish, milady"

* * *

><p>"Are you gonna throw it or not?" Astrid laughed.<p>

Merida glared at her, swinging the axe in a dangerous way "Don't rush me!" she yelled, the red of her face almost matching the one of her hair.

Beside her, Ruffnut whimpered "Woah there, princess! Be careful with that axe"

"Don't call me _princess_, Ruff" the girl hissed.

Astrid smiled.

She was glad the two girls had made friends, they had been a great support in the past two weeks. And it was good having them as allies.

The men were having a meeting so to escape her mother's sewing lessons, Merida had asked the two Vikings to teach her axe throwing in the woods.

"Why can I shoot arrows like nothing but can't hold an axe? Why can't I be good like you?!" Merida snapped.

"The axe is much heavier than a bow" Astrid explained "Besides, we've been throwing axes since we were born"

"Why couldn't I have been born a Viking?"

"Astrid is probably asking herself the same thing, you know?" Ruff snorted.

Astrid scowled at her but Merida didn't even hear her as she threw the axe.

"I DID IT!" she squealed.

"Good, Merida"

Astrid jumped up at sound of the Queen's voice.

"Mother?" Merida asked baffled "W-what are you doing here?"

"You quit your sewing lesson"

"I know this. I mean... you never followed me"

"That's because you've never been about to become Queen"

Elinor shot Astrid and Ruffnut a flat look like they weren't even there with her daughter, then turned to the princess.

"Let's go"

Astrid saw Merida balling her hands into fists and clench her jaw.

She knew she had no other option, so she picked up her gown and looked at the girls "Thank you" she simply said.

"I don't want you to learn axe throwing, Merida" they heard the Queen scold her as they disappeared in the woods.

The response was a very unlady-like groan "Mother, _please_"

End
file.